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An Examination of Parents' Responses to the Use of Literacy Kits in Order to Further the Support of their Child's Literacy Education

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An Examination of Parents' Responses to the Use of Literacy Kits in Order to Further the
Support of their Child's Literacy Education

By

Jillian Sara Fisher

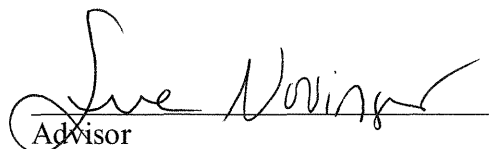
A thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of the State
University of New York College at Brockport in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Science in Education: Childhood Literacy.

November 29, 2010

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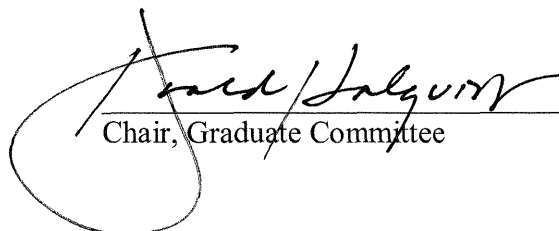
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Abstract

The literacy achievement of students was found to be closely related to the involvement of their parents in the classroom and the continuation of literacy activities in the home (Clark, 2007). This thesis describes the process of gathering and analyzing data to answer specific research questions regarding the reactions of parents and students to home literacy activities. This study examined the impact of providing parents with tools and knowledge to make an impact on their children's literacy education. The purpose of this study was to examine parents' responses to support their child's literacy education by using literacy kits. Parents were to complete literacy kits with their child at home and then were given the opportunity to respond on the effectiveness of the experience. Students also had the opportunity to share their reactions to these activities. This project was designed to give parents a chance to respond to efforts of furthering their involvement in home literacy activities.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The literacy achievement of students was found to be closely related to the involvement of their parents in the classroom and the continuation of literacy activities in the home (Clark, 2007). Family literacy can be facilitated through outreach and programs through both the classroom and the school district (Knaflie, 2005). Administrators should be supportive of the various creative programs that teachers develop in an attempt to involve families in classroom activities; teachers should be encouraged, if not required, to include aspects of family literacy in their informal curriculum. Though many parents have the desire to be involved in their children's school lives, they may not feel comfortable participating in the classroom or using the terms found in today's typical classroom. These thoughts may stem from feelings of discomfort in the school environment from their own days in school or from feelings of inadequacy with the classroom instruction procedures in which their children participate. With proper support, parents in this situation will gain confidence when involved in classroom activities and be better prepared to assist their own children in literacy needs.

This thesis describes the process of gathering and analyzing data to answer specific research questions regarding the reactions of parents and students to home literacy activities. This study examined the impact of providing parents with tools and knowledge to make an impact on their children's literacy education. The information was given and received through literacy kits. This tool was sent home

weekly with descriptions on how to implement the activities and opportunities for parent feedback. The specific research questions to be addressed in this study were:

1. What might parents learn about supporting their children's literacy learning when completing literacy projects at home with their children?
2. How might using literacy kits with their children impact parents' views about their children's literacy learning?
3. What are parents' perceptions of the assistance they provide their children with literacy kits at home?
4. What are students' responses to using literacy kits with their parents at home?

Parent involvement encompasses many aspects of classroom life. Families need to be included during the school day and should also be encouraging literacy learning at home and during the time that their children are not in school. Many researchers have conducted studies to understand the full potential of parental involvement and to develop the most benefits possible through employing a family literacy program (Knafllic, 2005; Mattingly, Prislín, McKenzie, Rodriguez, Kayzar, 2002). Various studies of this nature are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. Studies that have been conducted focus on a specific group of participants, making it difficult to generalize across a wide range of classrooms (Knafllic, 2005; Waldbart, Meyers, & Meyes, 2006; Pahl, & Kelly, 2005). Continued research was necessary in the field of family literacy as the impact of involvement needs to be studied in a wider variety of family situations. As more studies continue to be carried out, more social,

cultural, and educational groups can be factored into the implications of data gathered. For these reasons it was important to continue gathering and analyzing data to make it possible to pinpoint the impact of family involvement in literacy education.

The research questions discussed in this study were significant because the findings explored parent and student reactions to using literacy kits to promote family involvement in literacy education. The findings of this study have the potential to impact the level and kinds of involvement teachers encourage parents to engage with their children. If more school districts realized the power of family literacy it would become a higher priority in the programs of various classrooms. This research could provide a base on which to build a stronger parent education program that would lead to increased parent involvement and a greater impact on student learning. With proven success in a parent education program and positive impact on student literacy achievement, literacy kits could be studied in a wider variety of schools and classrooms and developed into a program that would be beneficial to a multitude of individuals. It would also be important to include the literacy practices of families who speak languages other than English. The different linguistic traits and cultural backgrounds found in various languages may affect the literacy achievement rates of these students differently than English speaking students. Future research programs could be developed to reach learners of all ages and families of many educational backgrounds and cultures as a way to battle the limitations caused by this study.

If the research questions of this study were not thoroughly researched a risk was taken that students will not have the opportunity to reach their full potential in literacy achievement. Family literacy may be a revolution in the literacy education of

children, but if not thoroughly researched and understood it cannot be properly instituted or utilized. All parents need to feel welcome and secure in classroom activities and procedures; this study explored ways to give parents a feeling of empowerment in their own learning through the use of literacy kits. If these methods were not put to trial many families of diverse backgrounds may have continued to feel excluded from the educational domain of their children's lives. If parent involvement is a major factor in increasing student success, every measure should be taken to assure that parents have the drive and proper knowledge to be involved and make an impact on their children's education. This study stressed the importance of pairing classroom learning with literacy instruction in the home.

More time and efforts are still necessary in supporting a strong theoretical base and extending the findings into common school literacy practice. The research questions that were the base of this study focused on the need for more tangible programs geared toward adults with the desire to become more involved in their children's schoolwork. Though much research (e.g., Knafllic, 2005; Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006; Clark, 2007) supported the need for parent involvement it will always be helpful to include insights and strategies for teachers attempting to create a program of their own.

For the purpose of this study the following definitions were used:

1. Literacy kits will be defined as the prepared materials that were sent home weekly to participants. Each kit contained directions, materials for the literacy activity, and an opportunity to submit feedback. Each kit also explained why the activity was important and how it could be used in the future.

2. Family literacy will be defined as the use of literacy at home and in one's community (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006). This term may also be used more broadly as any literacy event that happens outside of the classroom (Jay & Rohl, 2005).

The research questions were explored through the use of literacy kits and feedback from participating parents, students, and the classroom teacher. The data were analyzed qualitatively by finding patterns and themes in the feedback from participants. Triangulation occurred through the use of various data collection methods that will be analyzed in different ways.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This literature review focuses on the concept of family literacy and the means that it may be useful to furthering the communication and understanding between school and home life for students. Family literacy is a broad term that can encompass many aspects of home and school uniting for the growth of the student. This chapter discusses the benefits of facilitating home and school communication and explains various methods to keep parents involved in their children's literacy growth. It also talks about the concept of sending home literacy kits or bags to connect home and school literacy education.

Family Literacy

The term "family literacy" has many definitions and is the basis of various disagreements throughout research groups, governments, and school systems. Family literacy has been defined as any literacy activities in the home environment, parents sharing personal literacy skills with their children, or formal literacy training programs for parents (Jay & Rohl, 2005). This term has also been broadened to include any literacy activities outside the home or in the surrounding community (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006). Crawford and Zygouris-Coe (2006) also state that the United States Congress considers a program to be accepted as a family literacy program if it includes components of home, school, and the community. Each definition of family literacy differs in specifics but all definition maintains that the welfare of the child is the most important aspect in the programs. The differences

in definitions support the fact that family literacy is a concept that does not follow rigid guidelines. Each student and family needs a different plan to succeed in literacy training, both in and out of the classroom.

Families that participate in literacy activities together, whether in the classroom or at home, have a greater chance to make large strides in scholastic improvements and to grasp more general concepts than other families. Many researchers (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006; Dearing, Simpkins, Kreide, & Weis, 2006) have supported family literacy programs because of the benefits to both parents and students. These benefits include “higher academic achievement, greater cognitive competence, greater problem-solving skills, greater school enjoyment, better school attendance and fewer behavioral problems at school” (Clark, 2007, p. 1). Before those benefits can be implemented, however, it is important to know how various aspects of family literacy affect the different areas of students’ accomplishments.

Parental involvement can be broken down into three main categories: involvement and activities at home, involvement in the school environment, and home-school connections (Senechal, 2006a; Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006). This breakdown closely mirrors the definition of family literacy given by Congress and many other researchers; it supports that students’ achievements in literacy are affected not only in scholastic activities but are also affected by interactions that occur in the home and community. These various characteristics pose a challenge to developing a fool-proof literacy plan that reaches out to all students. It would be impossible to use one plan that takes into account all of the

home, community, and school interactions of a student. Instead it is necessary for educators to develop individual plans based on student need and family distinctions, or to develop one overreaching plan that can be easily adapted to different family lifestyles.

Before developing a family literacy program it is important to keep several main issues in mind. These concerns include setting obtainable goals, including parents and students in the development process, sharing information with fellow teachers and administrators, and remembering various differences between families in the classroom (Sink, Parkhill, & Marshall, 2005). It is also necessary to consider various languages spoken by the families in one's classroom. It has been shown that "parent beliefs and expectations about academic skills vary across linguistic groups as do the frequency and type of parent-child literacy activities" (Senechal, 2006b, p. 63). A family literacy program needs to be constantly reevaluated and changed based on these observations in order to ensure that students are receiving the most beneficial instruction possible.

Parent Involvement in the Classroom:

Not only do parents offer new insights and knowledge for the school community, but with involvement parents can become more comfortable helping their child at home (Egbert & Salsbury, 2009). For students to flourish in their literacy achievement it is vital for parents to be aware of happenings in the classroom. If parents are knowledgeable about the literacy practices in their child's classroom they can continue that education at home. Proper and congruent support can be given to students who can only benefit from more time reading and writing. An effective way

for parents to become knowledgeable about classroom activities is through personal experience. Family involvement not only helps to link home and school activities, it also supports more positive feelings toward school-related activities in the home, which in turn increases students' potential to do well in literacy and achieve goals in the future (Dearing, et al., 2006). Dearing, et al. (2006) also states that the increase of family involvement is shown to increase the likeliness of graduation and success beyond high school.

It is advantageous for students' families to become involved in the classroom and their children's education. Senechal (2006a) lists various activities that would encompass parent involvement in the school environment, including "volunteering in the classroom, acting as a chaperone for class field trips, participating in fundraising activities in the school, or planning classroom activities with teachers" (p. 3). Though this list of activities is helpful, it is composed of activities that occur mostly during the school day when many parents are working. Teachers and administrators can help include a larger group of parents by extending these activities outside of school hours. These activities can include literacy kits, family book clubs, and family picnics (Richardson, Richardson & Sacks, 2006). It is necessary to broaden the aspects of the classroom that include families so more parents can be included.

Establishing a Link between Home and School

Though parent involvement is a key component in the further development of literacy learning, it is also important to have a smooth and strong link between school and home life. Egbert and Salsbury (2009) note that some teachers eventually become too frustrated to continue extending invitations to parents to become involved in their

child's scholastic life. Teachers were hesitant to continue trying new interactive activities because parents already seemed disinterested in returning homework or communicating about school topics. The general feeling was that if parents were not willing to commit the extra time to help their child succeed, what should be expected of the teacher (p. 381)?

A strong connection between home and school ensures that parents and teachers are on the same page with the students' education. When a child sees the same values upheld by both his parents and teacher, he or she will be better able to see the importance of literacy learning. The underlying aspect of making this process work is communication between parents and teachers. This communication can take many forms and be utilized in various ways. It is important that any communication that happens between school and home is positive and for the good of the child involved.

Parents offer many important insights about their children as learners as they have spent much time with their children in different settings. Parents can be an invaluable resource about the individual practices that are most effective with their children. Senechal (2006a) suggests such communication devices between home and school as parent teacher conferences and formal meetings with school administrators. Though these measures are helpful in developing a base of communication, there are many informal methods to bridge the gap between home and school that can happen more frequently. Parents should be provided with individual communication plans that work to their own needs as individuals who play a major role in the growth of the students (Waldbart, Meyers, B., & Meyers J., 2006). These communication plans can

be catered to fit the different lifestyles that are seen in the community and one's classroom. Some methods of communication that do not involve direct contact inside the school may include newsletters, journals, and informative websites (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006). These types of communication tools can be more useful to parents who work during the day or who do not feel entirely comfortable entering the school.

It is necessary to become familiar with the different families in the classroom and the environment and communities that are familiar to them. Just as it is important to know each of one's students as individuals, it is important to learn about their families. One communication plan will probably not be effective for each family in the classroom; this may be attributed to the family's busy lifestyle, parents' communication preferences, or even the communication level between parents and the classroom teacher. When various communication tools are used to share information between home and school there is a greater chance that all families will be more involved in school life.

Parent Involvement at Home

It is important for parents not only to be involved in school activities but also to encourage good reading habits when students are not in school. Literacy involvement in the home environment is important because it offers students opportunities not easily found within the classroom. When at home children have access to a wide variety of reading materials, are exposed to different reading methods from family members, see the value placed on literacy by their families and

are privy to the reasons to be an active reader based on their own family's reading patterns (Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2005).

Richgels and Wold (1998) caution that when preparing a program to encourage family involvement it is necessary to provide the materials and instructions necessary to support the activities. They write that "programs to support family involvement are based on an erroneous assumption that they can automatically create enjoyment of reading and writing at home without...explicitly directing parents in possible opportunities for spoken or written language experience" (p. 19). In order to accomplish this, parents should feel support and encouragement from teachers when becoming involved in their children's education. It has been shown that reading at home with one's child will "provide a child with the encouragement and motivation to participate in literacy-related interactions, and support language and cognitive development" (Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005, p. 347). When reading with a child, parents have the opportunity to be sensitive and supporting, as well as to assist in instruction and comprehension. This nurturing could result in higher self-efficacy of the children involved and lead to greater participation among peers. Since parent involvement with literacy at home is so valuable, teachers should support this practice every way possible. Schools can offer workshops to encourage and facilitate reading at home and many teachers already require nightly reading as homework. Teachers can ask parents to share input about how to incorporate literacy activities into life at home and take this information into account when designing activities and programs.

There are many ways for parents to become more involved in their children's scholastic lives. Senechal (2006a) provides the examples of reviewing homework, listening to their children read, and borrowing books from a library as important ways for parents to be involved with their children's education in the home. Specific ideas targeting literacy in the home include family literacy text sets in which kits are sent home with parents to be read and discussed as a family. Closely linked to this is the idea of a take home book program and literacy learning kits (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006; Richardson, Richardson, & Sacks, 2006). These strategies all give parents an idea of the literacy activities happening within the classroom and a starting point to develop reading habits at home.

Methods to Involve Parents in Literacy Activities

Encouraging parent involvement is a vital component of a strong classroom literacy program. Each classroom should be equipped with many alternatives for parents to choose from and include in their own daily repertoire. If parents have different choices about how to be involved with their child's growth, it is more likely that they will find a way to fit literacy into their routine. Instead of changing their ideas to fit a rigid literacy plan, the plan can conform to the already laid groundwork found in the home.

One such suggestion to involve parents in literacy learning is supporting parents in literacy habits that are valued in the classroom so similar traits can be carried to the home environment (Waldbart, et al., 2006). Many parents believe that children should read at home but may not be sure how to support the process.

Waldbart, et al. (2006) discusses a study in which parents were given specific pointers and ideas on how to become involved in their child's reading. One focus parent who was observed interacting with her child at home improved greatly in her ability to ask prediction questions and check for comprehension throughout the text. This study supports the belief that with proper support students can continue their literacy growth outside of the classroom. They may make greater gains as they interact positively with texts in a variety of settings and see a value placed on reading by people they trust.

Crawford and Zygrouis-Coe (2006) also offer a variety of other ideas to use at home that may be more pleasing than homework, therefore making it more attractive to students who do not like to read. Among these ideas are journaling, photo projects, and cooking projects. Many children at the elementary age enjoy chronicling their activities, thoughts, and feelings throughout the week. A journal or diary is a great way to practice writing with voice, one of the six traits of writing. Journals can be expanded to include written conversations between students, teachers, and parents. Photographs can be easily incorporated into literacy projects; pictures can be used to inspire paragraphs, captions, and stories then used as bulletin board material. With photos a piece of either home or school life is easily transported to the other realm of a child's life and is a starting place for an informative and casual conversation that the student is familiar and comfortable with. Likewise, cooking projects can be used as a bridge between home and school life while providing information to other students about the different cultures that their peer group is composed of. Cooking projects may include a background reading or writing piece about where a type of food

originates and is a golden opportunity for a parent to be included in the classroom in his/her comfort level.

If parents offer their assistance and support with a classroom literacy program they should feel comfortable with the methods used to support the children. They should be prepared to offer helpful assistance to their children in spite of changing literacy practices or their own reading experiences (Knafllic, 2005). These parents may find it helpful to be involved in workshops and meetings with other parents to model literacy teaching tools and discuss questions and concerns with the literacy program. Colombo (2006) describes one such program, the Parent Partnership for Achieving Literacy program, which was run by a director who went extra steps to include as many parents as possible. This program sought to bring together a culturally diverse district and include more families in school activities. Parents were not only included in school activities but teachers learned about the cultures that their students' were a part of. The test scores in this district increased slightly but the PAL program was developed mostly for long-term changes, which were not reported in the article.

Joy and Rohl (2005) discuss a program in which parents were involved in each step of planning and implementation. The program was based around parental needs in literacy training and was kicked off with a set of workshops and discussions about such a program. Surveys were passed out to collect information about the home literacy practices taking place and analyzed for further consideration in developing a program. Teachers used the information gathered in the first workshop

to plan the following meetings; topics included development of literacy learning in the early years, sharing books with children, personal reading and reading with children, viewing, children's books, computer literacy and a review session. By being included in the stages of development of a new literacy program, parents are given a sense of empowerment and ownership within the school system instead of being bystanders in a foreign world of reading.

Effects of Parent Involvement on their Child's Literacy Achievement

Parent involvement in and out of the classroom has the potential to positively affect both parents and students. If parents are empowered to participate in the literacy growth of their child they may take the opportunity to go beyond expectations and be a great influence. Students may see the value that is placed on literacy education and continue to set high goals and work diligently toward them.

The research conducted in the area of family literacy supports the expected improvement of student achievement with the increase of parent involvement in the programs. Weigel, et al. (2005) has found this to be true for a range of age groups, even affecting pre-school children. Parent involvement in reading to their pre-school age children has shown children who "exhibited greater print knowledge skills and stronger interest in reading" when parents "read aloud to children, provided picture books in the home for children's use, visited the library with their children, and engaged in reciting rhymes, telling stories, drawing pictures and playing games with children" (Weigel, et al., 2005, p.371). These results showed an effect even on the achievements of children years later.

Family involvement in literacy programs should be viewed as a long-term association with many benefits (Dearing, et al., 2006). Though a quick fix program may be helpful to the current test scores, families and children need to be supported and encouraged to continue using strategies and tools beyond the years of a given program. Literacy education that can be adapted to many years of reading and writing will be useful in the future and assist students in achieving their goals. Family involvement not only increases literacy rates, it has also been shown to influence verbal communication and overall behavior as well as improved attitudes and overall grades (Colombo, 2006). When family involvement is portrayed as a valuable and desired option to furthering student achievement, it can have farther reaches than the immediate expectations. If students are working with their families to achieve a goal they are likely communicating verbally in a way that will carry over to the classroom. If students feel empowered by their families to set their school expectations high, they have a better chance of reaching them. Students will flourish in their scholastic lives if they have the continued positive support from different aspects of their worlds.

One research study found that parent involvement can be even more productive when parents are taught specific reading strategies to use with their children (Senechal, 2006a). Reading strategies would include those being used in the classroom, perhaps shared with parents through newsletters or teacher modeling sessions. As the result of these types of parent training activities, it has been shown that “adult self-esteem grew; confidence was gained in speaking in the group, asking for information, sharing ideas and experiences, feeling able to approach the school”

(Pahl & Kelly, 2005, p.94). Other gains made by parents include enhancing their own knowledge about information learned in school in areas such as mathematics and writing (Holloway, 2004). Parent involvement is not only helpful in terms of literacy training but also increases parents' comfort in the classroom and knowledge of daily activities.

Literacy Kits

Egbert and Salsbury (2009) mention that an important need for successful literacy education is for parents and students to have common understandings and ideals about what is expected in a literacy education. These researchers also urge literacy educators to remember that parents and students all have different needs to be met. An effective method to meet the needs of different families and keep parents current with classroom literacy practices is through the use of literacy kits, or bags. Families who cannot participate in school functions during the day, whether they are lacking in time, transportation or child care, are all able to participate in home literacy kits or bags (Barbour, 1998). One benefit of using literacy kits is that the materials are all able to be taken to the family at home.

In talking about literacy bags as a new idea for instruction, Betterton & Ensworth (2006) wrote that the "literacy bags would help us integrate language arts across the curriculum, promoting differentiated instruction while taking into account various learning styles and multiple intelligences" (pg. 52). Literacy kits can take many forms but may include such things as books, activities and videos that focus around a central theme (Klatt, & Hindmarsh, 1993). Many researchers suggest using

a theme for each kit, whether it is text genre or specific learning strategies. (Betterton, & Ensworth, 2006; Dever, & Burts, 2002; Barbour, 1998) Using themes for the literacy kits can afford students the chance to choose what they practice and have a means to obtain specific texts and activities.

According to DeBruin-Parecki (2009) the parent behavior that happens during shared reading can have a major impact on a child's success. DeBruin-Parecki shared a list of the reading behaviors that are important to exhibit when reading together. They are: "questioning, scaffolding dialogue and responses, offering praise or positive reinforcement, giving or extending information. Clarifying information, restating information, directing discussion, sharing personal reactions, and relating concepts to life experiences" (p. 386). These and similar behaviors can all be included as purposes to different literacy kits that are sent home with students. The behaviors can be offered to parents as keys to work on while reading aloud with one's child.

Literacy kits can also reference kits in which parents receive reading material and appropriate suggestions on corresponding activities to use with the texts (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006; Richardson, et al., 2006). When developing these kits Egbert and Salsbury (2009) suggest that the teacher acts as the guide for interactions, parents are encouraged to try new ways to work with their child, and the activities included in the kits are presented to parents in an easily understood method. It is also stated the parents need to have explicit instruction on what is expected of them at the completion of each kit. Participants thrive when they have specific

expectations. Richardson et al. (2006) suggests combining the idea of a literacy kit with corresponding physical activities to include in the home. This way reading is enriched with various fun activities for the whole family.

After developing and implementing a backpack program, Richgels & Wold, (1998) discuss the steps taken to design an effective take home literacy program. The steps that they write about include choosing the books for each kit, categorizing the chosen books, collecting supporting materials, and scheduling the program. Books should be chosen that encourage positive interactions and enhance literacy-gearred conversations (p. 20). Once appropriate books are chosen for the kits, the texts should be categorized into reading level and genre. For this particular study, Richgels & Wold decided to separate the take home kits into genres. At least three texts were included in each genre kit; the books included were of different levels so all types of readers could easily complete the kits. In addition to multiple texts, each of the literacy backpacks included materials for writing and drawing, finger puppets, and a response journal. The kits were prefaced with a letter explaining to parents the purpose of the backpacks and different prompts for using the extra materials in the kits. Richgels and Wold also state that it is important to have a schedule for passing out and collecting the backpacks so each student has an opportunity to use the books and materials. This study was received very well by participating parents, students, and teachers (pgs. 26-28).

Dever & Burts (2002) also reported on a study that they implemented involving the use of family literacy bags (FLB). They designed this project with the

desire to see parent involvement with reading increase. Dever and Burts also wanted to see children involving other members of the family in their reading growth. When designing the FLB, Dever and Burts were sure to include three texts of various reading levels, activities that fit in with the books and materials to complete any activities. Each FLB also included a parent guidebook that explained to parents how to read and discuss the book with their child and how to use the extension activities. Data collection was completed through the use of surveys and questionnaires discussing the amount each FLB was enjoyed and how much time and energy were spent on literacy activities. In general, there were positive responses to the use of FLB. Participants reported enjoying seeing new books and corresponding activities. Parents also shared appreciation for learning about the different types of books that exist, such as books that help with counting and numbers. The only negative reactions came from the inclusion of Spanish books in the kits. English-speaking families felt that the Spanish books were just extra things to keep track of. Spanish-speaking families wrote that they were trying to teach their children how to speak and read English and took offense by the offered Spanish books. Another negative reaction was regarding the time that parents were expected to put into the literacy kit activities each week. A participating teacher reported that while students were always enthusiastic to bring the FLB home, their parents were tired of the investment (Dever, & Burts, 2002).

In a similar study, Barbour (1998) discusses the impact of 'home literacy bags' on parent participation and engagement. The purpose of this study was to give parents high quality literature options to use with their children and coach the parents

to become teachers at home. Each of these BEAR bags (Be Excited About Reading) contained at least four books of a similar theme and at least two enrichment activities that correspond with and extend the theme. Included in the bags were instructions for parents' use and a contract so teachers, parents, and students were upheld to the standards of completing the activities. After the completion of this study, teachers gave positive feedback about the project and student perceptions about the study.

Crawford and Zygouris-Coe (2006) suggest including culturally relevant texts within the kits to reach out to the variety of families found in today's classrooms. If parents from various backgrounds see texts and activities that they are familiar with they may feel a greater motivation to spend time going through assignments with their child. A connection is made possible between parents and the classroom that may not have been present before. Another way to include diverse families is to include an audio tape of the books being read aloud (Barbour 1998). The inclusion of an audio tape ensures that parents who are not able to read English or who do not feel comfortable reading aloud can still enjoy the books with their child.

Whether or not these literacy kits embrace physical activity or are geared toward specific cultural ideas, they can provide a way to involve parents with the literacy learning that is happening in their child's classroom. Parents can fit the kits into their schedule and learn how to enhance their child's reading and writing at home. Students are provided with a different variety of materials and they are encouraged to work with a parent, increasing communications within the family (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006). Parents have generally responded favorably to

various studies that have been conducted using literacy kits of some sort. Barbour (1998) wrote that after implementing her literacy bag study she noticed that all parents were impacted by the information, not just the parents who are typically involved in the classroom. She also wrote that the literacy bag study positively affected the behaviors and attitudes of parents in the classroom and those parents were able to learn more about their children as students.

Literacy kits can take on a variety of forms but all include taking literacy outside of the school setting and into the home. These kits involve various family members in literacy-based activities that will hopefully pique the interest of students. The kits may also serve to involve and support parents in their own understanding of the literacy activities that happen in the classroom.

Conclusion

Family literacy is a growing practice in schools throughout and beyond the nation. Researchers and teachers agree that the impacts of parental involvement in the classroom are beneficial to children, teachers, and parents alike. Though other influences may affect the accomplishments of students, such as family history and socio-economic standing, it has been shown that parent involvement outweighs any other factors (Clark, 2007). Involvement does not end in the classroom however; it needs to be extended beyond the walls of the school into the home environment. Literature provides many examples of how to bridge the gap between home and school, including personal interactions and packaged kits. Family involvement in

literacy not only increases children's literacy rates but also the probability of graduating high school and overall satisfaction with school.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine parents' responses to support their child's literacy education by using literacy kits. Parents were to complete literacy kits with their child at home and then were given the opportunity to respond on the effectiveness of the experience. Students also had the opportunity to share their reactions to these activities. This project was designed to give parents a chance to respond to efforts of furthering their involvement in home literacy activities. Parents had opportunities to share in these literacy experiences and to further their own growth as home literacy instructors for their children. This study was based on research that stated increased parent involvement would have a positive effect on the classroom achievements of their children (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006; Dearing et al., 2006).

The research questions that this study strove to answer were:

1. What might parents learn about supporting their children's literacy learning when completing literacy projects at home with their children?
2. How might using literacy kits with their children impact parents' views about their children's literacy learning?
3. What are parents' perceptions of the assistance they provide their children with literacy kits at home?

4. What are students' responses to using literacy kits with their parents at home?

Participants

This study focused around participants in a suburban school district that bordered a mid-size city. The district was found in a village of approximately 3,500 residents. The families who lived in this village were mostly middle class and many were involved in their children's scholastic lives. The district in this town was comprised of four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. This school district served parts of surrounding towns, which brought the population of the district to 22,334. The district had various supporting programs that included Odyssey of the Mind and Leadership groups ("District Facts," n.d.).

This study took place in one of the four elementary schools in the district. This school had a total enrollment of 502 students, 79 of them being third graders. 19% of the students in this school were eligible for a free lunch; 9% were eligible for a reduced price lunch. In this school 92% of the population was Caucasian. This school was in Good Standing with New York State for ELA, Mathematics, and Science and had received Title I Part A funding for the past four years ("Report Card," n.d.).

This study took place in a third grade classroom of 21 students and their parents. In this classroom two of the female students were African American, one of the female students was Asian; the remainder of the students were Caucasian. Twelve students were female and nine students were male. These students had one Caucasian

classroom teacher though various classroom aides pushed into classroom instruction and pulled out students throughout the day; these aides were Caucasian. There were many parent volunteers who helped with different aspects of classroom instruction; some parents led small groups and others acted as an extra adult in the classroom.

Many of the students in this class lived with both parents. One girl was a foster child and was adopted by an older single mom who already has four adult children. One boy lived with just his mother; his dad was completely absent in his life. One girl had no contact with her biological-father but lived with her mother, step-father and grandmother. One student was adopted from China.

The focus group that was used in this study included one Asian female, one Caucasian female, and two Caucasian males. The Asian female lived with her adoptive parents and was intrinsically motivated to read and learn. Her parents had limited contact with the classroom teacher. The other female in this study was reading and writing below grade level. She lived with both parents and neither of them was very involved in her classroom growth. One of the male participants in this study was reading beyond the third grade level and received a great amount of support at home. His parents were both very involved with his education and growth as a reader. The other male participant was a struggling reader and his mother had a lot of communication with the classroom teacher about classroom happenings. The focus group of students was selected based on their and their parents' willingness to participate in the activities that would be included in the literacy kits. The information pertaining to students' background was obtained through conversations with the classroom teacher.

Participants were selected for this study based on their willingness to participate in the experiences and time commitment that were required. Parents were not selected based on any characteristics of their children since the main purpose of this study was to focus on the growth and reactions of parents. As the researcher in this study, I developed and provided the literacy kits for families as well as gathered and analyzed data. I worked in a third grade classroom with parents who were willing to participate in their children's scholastic lives; this study was geared to help educate them about the best ways to do so. I developed the literacy kits based on the suggestions made by the classroom teacher and my prior knowledge of literacy learning in third grade.

Cover letters and consent forms were sent to all parents in this third grade classroom. I introduced myself as a graduate student and thoroughly explained the purpose and procedures of this study. Parents were encouraged to ask any questions and were assured that if their willingness to participate ceased at any time during this study they could withdraw their permission with no consequence to their child. Students whose parents agreed to be in the study were given an assent form. This form was thoroughly explained to students so they knew exactly what the study would entail. This form was written at a level that third graders could easily interpret. Students were assured that if they no longer wished to participate in the study they could withdraw with no consequence.

Participant confidentiality was of the utmost importance throughout this study. Students and their parents were assigned pseudonyms in all of my notes, surveys, and interviews. All gathered data, as well as the key for student name and pseudonym

correlation was kept in a locked box throughout the study. Upon completion of the study, all information was shredded and discarded.

Instruments

I developed three main surveys that would act as data collection tools. These surveys took the form of pre-study assessments, post-kit surveys, and post-study assessments. The questions on the surveys were developed based on the data I needed to analyze in order to answer the research questions. The pre-study assessment survey gathered information about the home literacy practices of participants before the study began. I wanted to collect information that would give me a reference for potential growth or change. Examples of the pre-study surveys can be found in Appendices 1, 9, and 10.

I developed literacy kits that were sent home weekly with the students who participated in the study. I developed the literacy kits based on recommendations of the classroom teacher and knowledge of the third grade ELA curriculum (<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/nysatl/engstand.html>). Topics for the literacy kits included: making connections, making inferences, finding the main idea of a story, author's purpose, and visiting a library/appropriate book choice. There were five literacy kits developed, one for each week of this study. Each kit contained an introduction to parents that explained the purpose of the specific literacy activity. Kits had all the materials necessary to complete the activity and methods for assessment. These kits also provided parents with examples on how to continue working with specific literacy strategies at home with their children. In each kit

parents were encouraged to fill out a post-kit survey that allowed them to comment on the effectiveness of the activities and text. The materials and directions contained in each kit can be found in Appendices 2-7, 13 and 14.

The post-study assessment survey was used to gather information about any changes that happened during the study and the completion of the literacy activities. Participants were also asked for feedback about the effectiveness of the study and any changes they would recommend. Examples of the post-study assessments can be found in Appendices 8, 11 and 12.

The purpose of the literacy kits was to further parents' understanding of the literacy learning their children were experiencing in the classroom. The kits described to parents the purposeful learning that was happening in the classroom and kept them better connected with their children's school environment. Parents also became better equipped to assist their children with literacy growth outside of the classroom. Research has shown that some parents do not participate in school functions because they feel incapable of assisting their children or uncomfortable in the school environment (Dearing et al., 2006). These literacy kits helped bridge the gap between what assistance a child received in the classroom and at home. These kits helped to answer the research questions because they provided a platform with which parents learned about supporting their children's literacy learning. These kits were the basis of the study. A matrix has been included in the appendix to detail how each survey contributes to the findings of the four research questions (Appendix 15).

One literacy kit was sent home to participating families each week of the study. Families had the time span of one week to complete the activity and fill out

the feedback form before kits were collected in the classroom again. Upon the completion of each kit, participants received a new kit to bring home and complete. Participating families worked through five different literacy kits before the study was finished.

Parents and students were asked to fill out a response sheet about their perceptions of the usefulness of each particular kit. Parents did not only give back this feedback but also commented on their changing perceptions as literacy educators for their children. Parents had one week to complete the literacy kit activity and return the response sheets. I developed the questions for parents and students to fill out separately based on the research questions for this study. Each feedback prompting sheet can be found in the appendices.

The purpose of the weekly literacy kit assessments was to get parents' opinions on the usefulness of this tool in their children's literacy growth. The research questions asked for parents' and students' perceptions and responses about the literacy kits and their effectiveness on literacy growth. These surveys gave participants the opportunity to share their perceptions on not only the usefulness of the kits in literacy growth but also the advantage they may offer to parents who were interested in working exclusively with their children at home.

Procedures

The parents who chose to participate in the study received a general explanation about the study requirements and activities a week before the study was scheduled to begin. This explanation was sent home and reminded parents of the

purpose of the study and what was expected of them. It also listed the benefits and potential impact on their future literacy work at home with their children.

Before the study began parent participants and their children were surveyed about current literacy practices in the home. Parents were asked questions pertaining to their understanding of literacy education, their comfort level helping their children with literacy activities at home and the different strategies they may use when helping their children (Appendix 1). Student participants were asked questions pertaining to the amount of time parents spend with them on literacy homework, how effective home literacy activities usually were, and if they think working at home is valuable (Appendix 9). Parents and students were all asked if they thought increased parent knowledge about classroom literacy activities would be effective in continued success. The classroom teacher was also surveyed. She was asked about current parent involvement in students' academic lives and her perception of increased home literacy activities (Appendix 10).

Each Thursday of this five week study parents received a different literacy kit. Each kit included a cover sheet explaining the specific activity kit, the materials necessary to complete the activity, and an evaluation form. The cover sheet explained the specific purpose of the literacy kit and what long term goals it should have help students with. The cover sheet also included strategies that parents could use to help their children incorporate the reading/writing skill into their everyday literacy habits. Parents were expected to fill out the evaluation form. They were prompted to include their response to the effectiveness of the literacy kit and if it helped them feel prepared to assist their students in the future. Students were asked

their perceptions on the effectiveness of the literacy kits and if they believed these activities would be beneficial to them in the classroom. Parents were expected to return the literacy kit each Monday with the two completed surveys included.

At the end of the study parent and student participants and the classroom teacher were all re-assessed on their views of home-literacy interactions (Appendix). Questions were similar to the pre-assessment. Responses were analyzed to gauge the amount of growth made through this five week study and to look for themes that developed among the families.

Limitations

Limitations of this study included the size of the participant group. Findings from such a small group shouldn't be generalized into larger findings. One limitation that was present in this study dealt with students who did not follow through with the entire five weeks, thus making the participant pool smaller. Another limitation is that because I am not the classroom teacher parents may not have trusted me or followed directions as well as they would have for the classroom teacher. A final limitation came from the participant pool itself; many of the volunteers were already fully involved in their child's education and so did not particularly need to be informed about the literacy practices that were happening in the classroom.

Data Collection

Data were collected through the various surveys and feedback sheets that were provided to participants. This feedback was given before and after the study as a whole and also followed the completion of each literacy kit.

Each participant, including the classroom teacher, was given a pre and post-study assessment survey to complete about their perceptions of their child's literacy (Appendices). The pre-study assessment asked parent participants about the perception they have of themselves as literacy coaches for their child. Parents were also asked for their thoughts about the general idea of practicing literacy education at home. The post-study assessment asked parents if their knowledge of literacy practices increased through the use of the literacy kits or if they felt better prepared to offer support to their child. Parents were again asked for their ideas of parent involvement with literacy education.

Each literacy kit included a parent feedback survey that collected data about the effectiveness of the literacy kit and if it helped them feel prepared to assist their child in the future (Appendix 14). Students filled out feedback forms about their perceptions on the effectiveness of the literacy kits and if they believed these activities were beneficial to them in the classroom (Appendix 13). Parents and students were also asked to share ways that they would change each kit to make it more effective in the future. Parents filled out the forms in their homes to be returned with the literacy kits; students were encouraged to fill out the forms on their own without parent help. Students put their initials on the returned surveys so I could keep

student and parent surveys together. After I collected each survey I changed the initials to the appropriate pseudonyms.

Data were collected each week for the time allotment of this study, five weeks. The literacy kit feedback surveys were collected once a week; the pre- and post- study assessments were given at the commencement and completion of the study.

Data Analysis

As data were collected it was analyzed qualitatively through the constant comparative method. I thoroughly searched through the data to uncover themes that tie into the research questions. I began to analyze the data by looking at it kit by kit and finding themes between the surveys that I have collected. I then analyzed all the data family by family and looked for similarities in their responses to the five kits they completed. The trends and themes I found in the surveys and kit feedback will determine how the kits could be used in the future.

Before beginning to analyze the data, I created a chart that depicted the answers that each participant wrote on the various surveys. The chart was grouped by literacy kit and each answer to the kit assessments was recorded in a separate column. Participants were given their own row to keep answers together. This chart can be found in Appendix 16. I read through this chart to look for the themes and reoccurrences in each literacy kit and to familiarize myself with the answers I should expect from each family.

For each research question I searched through the participants surveys to find the questions that would produce the most meaningful themes for each of the four research question. The research questions were simply given labels 1, 2, 3, and 4. I drew up a separate graph (Appendix 15) that depicted the best matches for each research question so I knew which questions to draw from when analyzing the data. I kept all of the materials returned from each participant organized together so I could easily read through the surveys from one particular participant at once.

In order to assure that the results of this study were valid I used at least three data collection instruments (pre-study assessments, post-kit surveys, and post-study assessments). I also analyzed data by comparing information across families and across literacy kits. Through multiple methods of data collection and analysis, triangulation occurred for valid results.

Alterations

Two major alterations were made during the course of this research study. The first change connected to the number of participants. During the third week of the study one of the participants decided to withdraw from the study and no longer participate in completing the literacy kits. After this participant withdrew, all of the data collected from him/her was destroyed and no longer applicable to be used in the data analysis. Because the participant withdrew so late in the study, I was not able to find a replacement who would be able to complete each of the five kits in the time allotment for the study as a whole.

The second alteration for this study dealt with a weekly literacy newsletter. I decided not to include the newsletter because parents were already spending time

each week working on the literacy kits. In hindsight, this proved to be a wise choice because the participant who withdrew from the study did so because of time constraints during the course of the week. Another parent also commented that some of the kit activities took too much time for her when she was already spending much time with her child on regular classroom assignments.

Time Schedule

This study began on a Thursday and lasted for five weeks. Each Thursday student participants were given one literacy kit to take home and complete with parents. Each Monday of the study participants were expected to return their completed literacy kits to school. Some weeks parents would not have time during the weekend or students would forget to pack their literacy kit, making the flexible scheduling necessary so the kits could keep being sent out weekly.

Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the response of parents to literacy support offered through literacy kits. Participants were to take home and complete one literacy kit per week for the span of five weeks. This study was developed to further parents' understanding of the literacy practices that are happening in the classroom. The research setting for this study was in a third grade classroom in a suburban town. The class was composed of 21 students and one primary teacher, though many support teachers moved in and out of the classroom during the day. My role in this study was to develop and implement the literacy kits used in the study. I acted as an outside party collecting data as a means to answer the research questions.

Though five students and parents volunteered to be in this study, only four families continued the study through to the end. The student who chose to withdraw from the study will not be included in the findings or analysis as agreed on the consent forms. For the purpose of this study, students have been given the following pseudonyms: Stacy, Christopher, Kristen, and Anthony.

Stacy lived with both parents who work during the day. She was an only child but considered her two dogs to be her siblings. Stacy's mother was supportive of her education and was fighting for Stacy to receive an IEP or 504 plan to help her with testing modifications. Though her mom believed she needed extra support, Stacy twice tested too high to qualify for these programs. Christopher lived with both parents who were very supportive of his achievements in school and encouraged him

to reach his full potential on all assignments. His mother didn't work at the time so she was home with him whenever he was not at school. Christopher had one sister but she was married and not living at home anymore. Not only was Christopher achieving above grade level in school, he also enjoyed spending time outdoors camping and hiking. Kristen lived with her brother and two parents. Kristen and her brother were both adopted from Korea. Kristen's mother was a middle school teacher so had a comfortable grasp with the school system. Kristen was involved in many extracurricular activities, including Irish dancing. Anthony lived with two parents and three siblings. His parents both worked and were very involved in his growth as a student. Anthony had received some tutoring outside of school to help expand his knowledge of mathematics, not because he was struggling in school.

The research questions used in this study are as follows:

1. What might parents learn about supporting their children's literacy learning when completing literacy projects at home with their children?
2. How might using literacy kits with their children impact parents' views about their children's literacy learning?
3. What are parents' perceptions of the assistance they provide their children with literacy kits at home?
4. What are students' responses to using literacy kits and working with their parents at home?

The instruments used in this study to gather data and provide triangulation for these questions included literacy kits and researcher generated surveys. Literacy kits were

developed based on areas of need within this specific third grade classroom. Kit topics included main idea, author's purpose, choosing an appropriate text, making inferences, and making connections. Participants were given a pre-study survey that asked about their notions of literacy learning in the classroom and their perception of how they helped their child with literacy education before the study began. After one literacy kit was completed parents and students were asked to fill out a questionnaire depicting the usefulness of the specific kit. At the end of the study participants were again asked to fill out a survey that conveyed the changes they had seen through the use of literacy kits with their children.

Question 1: What Might Parents Learn about Supporting their Children's Literacy Learning when Completing Literacy Projects at Home with their Children?

Christopher

Parent pre-study survey Christopher's mother stated that she was already knowledgeable about his literacy learning through communication with the classroom teacher. She stated that they spend time reading together daily and often go beyond the text when discussing the story together. Christopher's mother also wrote that "we read a book together as a family every night. At the end of each chapter, we always discuss what we read; including the plot, characters, and setting. We have fun talking about other outcomes, meanings, etc." (Appendix 17, Question 3).

Literacy kit surveys To summarize the findings over the five literacy kits, Christopher's mother found that she enjoyed working on the activities with her son but did not necessarily learn a lot about supporting his literacy learning. For example after completing the 'making inferences' literacy kit she wrote that "we had fun with it but we already practice these skills almost daily" (Appendix 18, Question 1). Multiple times she had similar responses about already being familiar with the specific strategies explained in the kit. In the kit that dealt with making connections she wrote that it gave them a good opportunity to talk about world issues, such as "the impact that illness and war have on people" (Appendix 19, Question 1). Hopefully this kit about making connections helped Christopher and his mother expand the discussions about text structure to issues in the world.

Parent post-study survey Christopher's mother stated that she did not feel she learned a lot about his literacy learning from these kits because she is very involved in her son's education. She stated that all of the reading strategies that were presented in the literacy kits were already being used by her son when they read together. Though she did not learn anything, she stated that the kits would be beneficial to families who were not as involved in their child's education (Appendix 20).

In summary, Christopher's mother did not seem to gain much knowledge in the support of his literacy education. She was already very involved in his school growth and had a strong grasp on the material presented. In the study post-assessment she wrote "I definitely feel the activities would be of great value to all families, if they were used in first or second grade when various reading strategies are

first introduced” (Appendix 20, Question 5). This shows that Christopher’s mother is aware of the benefits of parents being explicitly involved in their child’s literacy learning. In Christopher’s case, however, his parents were already aware of the skills that were necessary to prepare him to be achieving above grade level.

Kristen

Parent pre-assessment survey In the pre-assessment survey, Kristen’s mother stated that they use some specific literacy skills when reading together. Specific skills she named were “reading aloud, buddy reading, predicting (inferences) checking for comprehension” (Appendix 21, Question 3). She stated that she feels comfortable with the literacy practices in Kristen’s classroom and offering support at home.

Literacy kit surveys Throughout the literacy kit surveys Kristen’s mother often restated the purpose of the kit to answer the question ‘How useful do you find the activity in this kit?’ For the kit that supported finding an author’s purpose, Kristen’s mother wrote that “it helped us to discuss the author’s purpose for writing this book. Kristen said it was for information but in an entertaining way” (Appendix 22, Question 1). In another survey she wrote that the kit was useful because it “gives a purpose to reading the story by making connections” (Appendix 23, Question 1). This showed that Kristen’s mother was linking different literacy strategies, specifically making connections and reading for a purpose. The answer provided may have shown that Kristen’s mother understood that different literacy strategies work together to guide comprehension. It was not clear in the surveys

whether or not Kristen's mother felt well prepared to support her daughter with the literacy growth that happens on a daily basis. Kristen's mother did not write about strategies that she took out of the literacy kits but restated the purpose of each kit. Since she did not write any explanations of why the kits were useful it was difficult to interpret what she may have taken from them.

Parent post-assessment survey Kristen's mother stated that she felt better prepared to help her child with literacy assignments at home but did not go into detail on the survey as all she wrote was the word 'yes'. When asked if she had learned any skills to use while helping Kristen with literacy assignments she specifically mentioned 'making connections' but did not list any details or explanations (Appendix 24).

In summary, Kristen's mother wrote that she felt better prepared to help her daughter after completing the literacy kit study. Unfortunately in the surveys that were returned, not many details were given about the type of growth that was made in the understanding of supporting Kristen's literacy education. The types of answers that were shared by Kristen's mother could have been prevented if the questions in the literacy surveys encouraged explanations and details.

Anthony

Parent pre-assessment survey Anthony's parent stated that the strategies used before the literacy kit survey included read aloud and sounding out words. Anthony's mother stated that "we have read aloud since birth to them" (Appendix 25, Question 3). As a family, a lot of time was spent with literacy

education because both of his parents loved to read and would have liked to instill the same ideals on their children.

Literacy kit surveys Anthony's mother stated that she found each of the literacy kits either "somewhat useful" or "very useful". The one that seemed to have the biggest impact was the kit that dealt with finding an author's purpose. Anthony's mother wrote that "it helped me explain to my son and for him to understand why there are so many books to choose from to read and why people read" (Appendix 26, Question 1). Throughout the literacy kit surveys it seemed as though Anthony's mother was the most willing parent to reflect on her own practices and how they may need to shift to accommodate his needs. When answering the literacy kit surveys she explained her answers and wrote about how her perceptions about Anthony as a reader changed after each kit. Anthony's mother looked at the skills that were being presented in the kits and connected them to the activities that he brings home from school. For example, she wrote about how she "learned about packets and worksheets that Anthony works on at school" (Appendix 27, Question 2). She also stated that a kit "helped show me his understanding of fiction/nonfiction stories" (Appendix 26, Question 2). Where many of the other parent participants answered with short sentences, Anthony's mother expanded on her thoughts and ideas. For example, in the parent post assessment for the literacy kit study, parents were asked various questions about the effectiveness of the kits in general. Where other parents wrote 'yes' and 'no', Anthony's mother followed through with her ideas. When asked the question "do you think that your knowledge of the literacy practices in your child's classroom increased through the use of literacy kits? If so,

how?” she responded with “Yes, my knowledge definitely increased because I was able to see how he processes and comprehends what he reads by seeing the different strategies he uses.” Anthony’s mother seized the opportunity to reflect on her growth as a literacy support coach and hopefully gained different strategies to use at home with her son.

Parent post-assessment survey Anthony’s mother stated that she felt a little better prepared to help Anthony with literacy assignments at home. When asked if there were any strategies that she learned, Anthony’s mother wrote that “talking about why an author wrote the story really helps him understand the purpose and the content of the book” (Appendix 28, Question 3). This answer showed that Anthony’s mother was willing to take the strategies that were presented in the kits and adapt them to the needs that she and Anthony had when working together.

In summary, Anthony’s mother may have learned specific strategies that were used in the classroom. She was willing to think about how each kit could help her support her son’s literacy needs in the future. She went from talking about “sounding out words” to discussing author’s purpose with her son. According to the survey answers that Anthony’s mother provided, she learned about different strategies to use with Anthony while reading at home.

Stacy

Parent pre-assessment survey When answering the questions on the pre-study survey, Stacy’s mother stated that she uses a white erase board many times

when they work together on literacy activities. They also practice read aloud (Appendix 29).

Literacy kit surveys As a result of using the literacy kits Stacy's mother stated that she felt somewhat more comfortable supporting her child's literacy learning. After the literacy kit that included a visit to the library, Stacy's mother wrote that the kit "was a lot of work-we go through a lot with Stacy so the trip to the library was just one more thing. We have a ton of books at home" (Appendix 30, Question 1). This kit would have been appropriate to use at home as well, as long as Stacy was practicing choosing a book at her reading level. Stacy's mother said that she already uses a lot of these strategies at home. The only piece of information she took from the kit about making inferences was that Stacy learned what the word *inference* meant. The answers that she wrote on the various surveys made it seem as though she was unwilling to consider changing her own views about literacy education in the classroom. For example, for three of the questions on the literacy kit surveys asking how her literacy views changed Stacy's mother simply wrote 0. Though she wrote that she did not take any information from the literacy kits she also noted that each of the literacy kits were complete and nothing could be added to make them more efficient.

Parent post-assessment survey On the post-assessment survey Stacy's mother stated that she does not feel better prepared to help with literacy assignments and did not learn any strategies to use at home with Stacy. She did not expand on these answers but simply wrote 'no' (Appendix 31).

In summary, Stacy's mother did not feel as though she was much better prepared to support her daughter's literacy growth because many of the kit topics were strategies that she already used at home. She wrote that she was already involved in Stacy's education and these tips did not help her grow as a support system for her daughter. According to the classroom teacher, Stacy was at the lower end of the reading spectrum and may have benefited from more support at home. It seemed as though this idea disagreed with the self-concept that Stacy's mother had of herself as a supporter of literacy education. If Stacy's parents were already using these strategies at home, perhaps Stacy would benefit from alternate strategies that are not as common in the classroom. She may have needed a fresh approach to working with reading comprehension or some intensive literacy coaching. If this was a problem that arose in her literacy growth, communication with the classroom teacher and literacy educators would be beneficial to Stacy's growth in literacy.

Summary

To summarize the findings of the first question, the parents in this study mainly thought that they did not take many new strategies out of the literacy kits. Individually parents found the literacy kits useful and may have taken knowledge to use in the future, but did not necessarily find the kits helpful as a whole. It seemed that parents of students who believed their children were reading above grade level did not gain much knowledge but benefited from continued practice of the strategies already being implemented. For example, Christopher's mother was fully aware that in order for Christopher to succeed, he needed literacy support at home. Since she

believed this prior to the study, she did not need much explicit instruction in various strategies. Kristen's mother, who was a teacher herself, followed closely in this same pattern. Stacy's mother believed that her daughter was receiving the necessary literacy support at home, though this belief was not shared by Stacy's classroom teacher. Perhaps the parents of the strong readers could still use the opportunity to reflect on their practice.

Anthony's mother knew that her child needed extra support in literacy at home and I believe that she found the kits to be more useful than the other three parent participants. Anthony's mother seemed the most willing to reflect on her beliefs about the literacy support she offered at home. Because of her reflections and shifts in practice, she and Anthony stand to benefit the most from these literacy kits or similar activities.

Question 2: How Might Using Literacy Kits with their Children Impact Parents' Views about their Children's Literacy Learning?

Christopher

Parent pre-assessment survey In the pre-assessment Christopher's mother responded that working with students at home definitely helps them succeed in literacy education in the classroom. She wrote that "when parents are involved with the various aspects of literacy education, not only does it give us an idea of areas our kids may need help, but we are also able to spend more time on different concepts, connections, and set a good example for them" (Appendix 17, Question 4).

Christopher's mother began the study knowing that working with him at home on literacy assignments is vital to his growth as a student.

Literacy kit surveys Overall, Christopher's mother felt that she already had a firm understanding of her son's literacy learning. On three surveys Christopher's mother answered that the kits didn't expand her knowledge of literacy learning that happens in the classroom. For example, after completing the 'making inferences' literacy kit she wrote that the kit "didn't expand my knowledge of the learning in school, as I feel we have a pretty good handle on literacy skills employed at school" (Appendix 18, Question 2). Though the literacy kits did not necessarily change the views of Christopher's family about literacy learning, each week they spent at least thirty minutes completing the activities and discussing the texts. This continued practice can only strengthen Christopher's development in literacy and related activities.

Parent post-assessment survey Again, Christopher's mother stated that the knowledge of literacy practices was not greatly affected by the literacy kit assignments. She wrote "we are kept pretty well informed and work with our son by reading together daily" (Appendix 20, Question 1). This continued practice is what many classroom teachers hope to see with their students and seems to have had a positive impact on Christopher's literacy achievements. In the study post-assessment Christopher's mother again stated that these activities would be "beneficial to parents who may not normally read and work with their kids...if they were used in first or second grade, when various reading strategies are first introduced" (Appendix 20, Question 5).

Christopher's mother's views about her child's literacy learning were not impacted through the completion of the literacy kit study. She wrote that these kits would be beneficial to parents who are not as involved with their children and still need to learn about these strategies. Though Christopher's mother stated multiple times that these skills would be valuable to younger students, there are many classmates in Christopher's class who would benefit from extended explicit instruction in these skills. These findings were most likely due to the fact that Christopher was reading above grade level and had parents who were very involved in his literacy growth. Christopher also had a sense of ownership of his work and was able to work independently in the classroom and likely at home. Since Christopher took pride in his work his parents may have thought that all third grade students were using these literacy skills with ease.

Kristen

Parent pre-assessment survey Kristen's mother stated that she believed working with her child at home helped Kristen succeed in literacy growth. She wrote that "working with my child helps her succeed because she enjoys to read to me or listen to me read to her" (Appendix 21, Question 4). She also wrote that working together at home helped Kristen with vocabulary and comprehension skills.

Literacy kit surveys Kristen's mother stated that it was helpful to reinforce the skills that happen in the classroom and "it helps me to have literacy discussions with my child when we read books" (Appendix 22, Question 2). She did state in the 'making connections' literacy kit that she wasn't sure how the kit

expanded her knowledge of her child's literacy learning and answered in the 'library trip' kit that it was hard to say how her knowledge was expanded. It almost seemed to me as if Kristen's mother was not willing to spend much time reflecting on the knowledge she gained from working on these specific skills. She responded in one survey "I guess we're reinforcing literacy skills in the classroom" (Appendix 32, Question 2). According to Kristen's classroom teacher, her family was not very involved in classroom happenings. Since Kristen's mother was a teacher in the district and Kristen was very involved in extracurricular activities, these extra time constraints may have an impact on the amount of time Kristen's parents put into the literacy kits or their answers. Since Kristen was such a high reader it is probable that her parents were spending time with her at home and knew how to support her specific learning needs.

Parent post-assessment survey Kristen's mother wrote that working on these literacy kits strengthened her knowledge of literacy practices in her child's classroom. She answered once that "it helped to reinforce what I was already doing and gave me some new strategies to try as well" (Appendix 24, Question 1). The classroom teacher stated that since Kristen was so intrinsically motivated she doubted her parents need to show her much support at home. This may have been seen in the short responses that Kristen's mother gave in many of the surveys. Perhaps since Kristen was so able to work independently, her parents grew accustomed to only offering support when it was necessary. Her mother wrote that it was beneficial to "reinforce the literacy strategies they use at school here at home as well" (Appendix 24, Question 2). This response showed that Kristen's parents were aware that extra

support was fundamental in literacy growth; this may support the idea that they worked with her at home on various assignments.

Kristen's mother stated that her views on Kristen's literacy learning were impacted with the completion of the literacy kits, though in specific kits she had a hard time explaining how her views changed. The classroom teacher reported that Kristen's parents did not communicate with her very frequently; this may have been because they did not see the need for communication. Since Kristen was so motivated to complete her assignments and work independently, her parents probably did not need to show her a lot of support at home.

Anthony

Parent pre-assessment survey Anthony's mother wrote that she believed working with one's child at home definitely had a positive impact on his literacy education. She wrote that working with one's child now would impact him positively in the future and said that an explanation of each strategy would help her to use them more often. When asked if working with students at home would them succeed in the classroom she wrote, "Definitely! Repeat, repeat was the way we learned" (Appendix 25, Question 4). According to the survey, Anthony's mother was aware that extra support helped children succeed and believed that one way to grow as a learner was through repetition.

Literacy kit surveys Overall Anthony's mother gave positive feedback about changes in her views of Anthony's literacy learning. In each kit survey she wrote what she noticed about Anthony's thought processes while reading and using

the strategies. After completing and reporting on the kit focusing on making inferences she wrote, “this kit helped me see how Anthony makes predictions while reading and how he relates to the text while thinking of his real life situations” (Appendix 33, Question 2). She also made connections to the work that Anthony brought home from school and how she saw the purpose of the different assignments he is given by the classroom teacher. These kits helped Anthony’s mother connect what he was doing in school with what she could offer support with at home.

Parent post-assessment survey Anthony’s mother wrote that her views of Anthony’s literacy learning were impacted from the use of these literacy kits. She was able to “see how he processes and comprehends what he reads by seeing the different strategies he uses” (Appendix 28, Question 1). Anthony’s mother stated that she had the opportunity to ask Anthony how he got different ideas from the text and could see the kit strategies in action.

These literacy kits had a positive impact on the views that Anthony’s mother held about his literacy learning. She was able to look beyond his outward behaviors and talk to him about his thought processes and the reading strategies he used.

Stacy

Parent pre-assessment survey Stacy’s mother wrote in the pre-assessment that working with one’s child at home was a good support method for students’ literacy learning. She stated that the extra one-on-one support would be beneficial for her child. She wrote that “it reinforces the skills learned in school” and was “the combo that works best for Stacy!” (Appendix 29, Question 4). She also

wrote that being aware of Stacy's literacy practices helps her work on things with Stacy at home.

Literacy kit surveys When Stacy's mother completed the literacy kit surveys she wrote that her knowledge of literacy learning was not expanded at all. On the one kit survey that Stacy's father completed he wrote that the kit "let me know that the students don't just have to read them but know what the books are about" (Appendix 34, Question 2). If this kit helped him see that students are reading for meaning, hopefully that will affect his work with Stacy in the future.

Parent post-assessment survey Stacy's mother wrote that her knowledge of the literacy practices did not increase at all during the completion of the literacy kit study. She also stated that working with the specific strategies in the kit did not change the way she worked with Stacy at home. Instead of explaining her answers, she simply wrote 0 (Appendix 31).

Stacy's mother did not record any changes in her view about her child's literacy learning. According to the surveys she was very involved in the classroom and frequently communicated with the classroom teacher, thus having a strong understanding of Stacy's literacy learning. Stacy's father did record that his view changed slightly after working on the 'main idea' literacy kit with Stacy. According to the classroom teacher, if Stacy's parents were working diligently with her at home it did not show itself in the classroom. This discontinuity between school and home achievements could be addressed in a conference or other communication method. If the classroom teacher felt that there was no support from home, yet Stacy's parents felt they were offering substantial support, something may have needed to be

changed. Stacy may have needed to receive alternate strategies and support from school professionals and continue receiving confident support from her parents.

Summary

In summary, the parent participants' views were impacted differently. The three parent participants who believe that their children were on target did not show much change in their views about literacy learning. Christopher's mother noted that there was no change in her views about the support she offered him at home. She did write that these kits would be ideal for students who were only beginning to work on these strategies. Kristen's mother stated that in general the kits were beneficial, but did not name any specific reasons why they were so. Perhaps the shift was so minimal that it was hard to pinpoint what changed.

After considering that the majority of parents did not report much difference in their views about literacy learning, I have revisited the planning and implementation of the kits themselves. While I was drafting the kits and the strategies that they would address, I referred to the classroom teacher about the skills that her struggling readers would benefit the most from revisiting. She provided a list of strategies and I pulled from there. These strategies mostly focused on reading comprehension, so that was my central theme. I believe that the skills chosen would benefit the struggling readers in her classroom, but the participants themselves were not all struggling readers. I think that in order to make these kits more beneficial to the classroom as a whole, there should have been a scaffolding opportunity for

students who are reading at a higher level. I would recommend that this be changed in further studies of this kind.

Anthony's mother, who saw that her child may need extra support at home, reflected on and shifted her views about his literacy learning. After each kit she noted how she would use the strategies in the future. These kits would have been more beneficial to parent participants who knew their child needed extra support at home. In the participant pool of this study only one parent fit into this category.

Question 3: What are Parents' Perceptions of the Assistance they Provide their Children with Literacy Kits at Home?

Christopher

Parent pre-assessment survey Christopher's mother reported that she was very confident in her ability to help him with his school work and literacy growth. She wrote that she felt comfortable with the literacy curriculum as presented at the class curriculum night (Appendix 17). When asked how prepared she felt to help her child at home she wrote "...very prepared. I have always loved reading and writing, and enjoy helping him with assignments and activities" (Appendix 17, Question 2). The excitement that she has shown about literacy assignments may have played into Christopher's willingness to quickly complete activities assignments in school. In the classroom he was always among the first students finished and his work was usually thorough and complete.

Literacy kit surveys In the post-kit surveys Christopher's mother often stated that the skills learned were skills they already practiced when reading. After completing the kit about making inferences she wrote that "I really don't feel we learned anything from doing it, however, I feel these skills are crucial for kids to become critical thinkers and make connections to the text" (Appendix 18, Question 3). This sentiment was echoed in most of the other literacy kits; she would point out that she didn't learn anything but how she realized the skills presented would be valuable to other students. She also wrote that the skills in these kits were important for students to internalize and may assist in generating discussions in the future. In the 'library visit' kit, his father stated that the strategy learned would help Christopher in the future when choosing an appropriate text to read.

Parent post-assessment survey Since Christopher was a high-level reader; his mother felt that these kits were not as beneficial to him as they may be for a lower reader. She wrote in the pre-assessment survey that her ability to help Christopher did not change because she was already employing the strategies that were offered in the kits. Though these kits in particular did not make a change in her teaching, she did believe that working with one's child at home was important to the growth of literacy skills. Christopher's mother wrote that working with one's child "creates more interest, excitement, provides encouragement and makes them want to succeed more" (Appendix 20, Question 4).

Christopher's mother came into the study confident in her ability to assist him when necessary. Because of this perception, she did not report much growth through the use of these literacy kits. She did state multiple times that she believed providing

children with assistance at home was vital in their growth as learners and that these literacy kits would be valuable to students who were in the beginning stages of reading comprehension.

Kristen

Parent pre-assessment survey In the pre-assessment survey Kristen's mother stated that she felt very prepared to help Kristen with her literacy assignments and that she was knowledgeable in the literacy practices that happened in the classroom. In response to the first question (How would you describe your knowledge of the literacy practices in your child's classroom?) she simply answered "good to very good" (Appendix 21, Question 1). Kristen's mother did not go in to any detail about why she felt prepared to help her child at home or any discussion about her knowledge of classroom literacy practices. This is a flaw in the questioning which does not ask for explanations to all answers.

Literacy kit surveys In each literacy kit post-survey Kristen's mother stated ways she could continue using the strategy in the future. She frequently used the purpose of the kit as a base of what to use in the future. For example in the kit detailing author's purpose she wrote "we could discuss the author's purpose as we read more books together" (Appendix 22, Question 3). In the literacy kit about making connections she wrote "make connections with the story with my daughter, with the world, etc." (Appendix 23, Question 3). The kit about making inferences was similar with the statement "ask her more questions about what she thinks will happen" (Appendix 35, Question 3). Kristen's mother did not expand on her answers

very much when asked “how might you use the information learned from this literacy kit in the future when helping your child read?” This lack of expansion may have been due to the fact that Kristen did not need much extra support at home or that the family was very busy after school hours.

Parent post-assessment survey In the post-survey study Kristen’s mother again used very short answers, “Do you think that working with your child at home helps them succeed with literacy education in the classroom? Why or why not?” Kristen’s mother answered ‘yes’ (Appendix 24, Question 4). Kristen’s mother wrote in the study post-assessment that she still believed it was necessary to work with one’s child at home to help them succeed. She wrote that working with specific strategies helped her reinforce the strategies used at school.

Kristen’s mother began the study stating that she felt comfortable assisting Kristen in literacy learning. As she used the kits at home she began to name specific strategies that she would continue to work on with Kristen in the future. At the end of the study she stated that she had gained knowledge about various strategies that Kristen should use while reading, thus her perception may have become more positive through the completion of the literacy kits.

Anthony

Parent pre-assessment survey Anthony’s mother wrote in the pre-study assessment that the literacy practices that she was noticing in the classroom were very different than the education she had as a child. She stated that when she was in school they “didn’t have all this fancy stuff” (Appendix 25, Question 1). She

wrote that she felt prepared to help Anthony with literacy activities at home because of her love to read and her desire to pass that passion on to all of her children.

Literacy kit surveys In each of the literacy kit surveys, Anthony's mother named an example of how she could use the skills presented in the future. For example, after completing the main idea literacy kit she wrote that she "may break down the book into smaller parts to help my child understand the main idea of a story" (Appendix 27, Question 3). After the literacy kit detailing author's purpose Anthony's mother wrote that she "may use this information in the future when assisting my child or critiquing his writing assignments" (Appendix 26, Question 3). This answer showed that Anthony's mother understood that the strategies used in these kits could be adapted to assist with other assignments. During the literacy kit assignments Anthony's mother was able to mold the strategies that were presented into skills that would help her work with Anthony in the future.

Parent post-assessment survey In the post-assessment survey Anthony's mother wrote that working with her child helped to reinforce the strategies learned in the classroom. She also wrote that working together "makes him enjoy reading and writing more because it becomes a fun activity to do with your child" (Appendix 28, Question 4). Anthony's mother understood that the more enjoyable reading activities were, the more likely students were to engage in them. Anthony's mother had a positive perception of what her assistance provided for her child. She stated that using the specific literacy strategies helped her see Anthony as a reader and to learn about his thinking process as he worked on reading comprehension.

Throughout the literacy kit study Anthony's mother seemed to learn strategies that would further her assistance with Anthony's development. In the pre-assessment she stated that while she was helping Anthony at home she realized that the assignments were different than what she was familiar with from her schooling. Throughout the kit assignments she was able to name different strategies to use at home and hopefully she will continue to become more comfortable helping Anthony with his literacy activities.

Stacy

Parent pre-assessment survey Stacy's mother wrote in the pre-assessment survey that she felt very confident with her ability to assist her child with literacy activities prior to the kit assignments. According to her survey she communicated frequently with the classroom teacher and was very prepared to help her child with literacy assignments at home (Appendix 29).

Literacy kit survey Throughout the literacy kit activities Stacy's mother did not seem to show a shift in her perception of the assistance she could provide her child. This may have been due to the fact that she felt very comfortable with her help before the study began. The only strategy mentioned in the literacy kit responses that showed a shift in thinking was that Stacy's parents would ask her more questions about the text while reading together. Stacy's mother wrote that she realized that "we have to help her every day" (Appendix 30, Question 3). Hopefully this meant that Stacy's parents were willing to spend time with her working daily on

the literacy strategies that were necessary to bring her literacy achievements to grade level.

Parent post-assessment survey Though Stacy's parents wrote that it was important to work with one's child at home on literacy assignments, they did not seem to show a shift in their perception of helping Stacy during the kit activities. Stacy's mother responded that working with specific literacy strategies from the kits did not change the way they worked at home. Of the five questions on the post assessment, Stacy's mother answered 'no' to two questions and 0 to two questions asking about her growth and shifts of thinking after completing the literacy kits (Appendix 31).

Stacy's parents were both confident in the assistance that they provided their child at home with her literacy activities. Because of this confidence they did not report a shift in their perceptions of the help they offered Stacy. Though their perceptions did not drastically change, they did say that it would be important to remember to use the strategies presented more frequently.

Summary

In general, the parent participants in this study had positive perceptions about their ability to assist their children with the literacy assignments that were sent home by the classroom teacher. The three parent participants who had higher perceptions of their children's abilities were less impacted by the literacy kits as they wrote that the strategies presented were already being practiced in their homes. The parents of Christopher, Kristen, and Stacy all felt very confident in their ability to support their

children before beginning the study. This confidence came from communication with the classroom teacher and their own reading habits. Christopher and Stacy's parents specifically mentioned that these activities would be beneficial to younger children who were beginning to learn these strategies.

Anthony's mother was also very sure about her ability to help her son at home with literacy activities. Though she was always willing to help Anthony at home, she did mention that the strategies were different than she was familiar with from her own schooling. Through the use of these kits, Anthony's mother was able to become more familiar with the skills that are used in the classroom.

Question 4: What are Students' Responses to Using Literacy Kits and Working with their Parents at Home?

Christopher

Student pre-assessment survey Before participating in the literacy study, Christopher wrote that he spent at least thirty minutes working with his parents on reading and writing homework each day. He wrote that he liked working with his parents because it made the activities "more fun and interesting" (Appendix 36, Question 2). When asked his thoughts about how comfortable his parents were with helping him read he wrote that they were definitely comfortable "because writing was my mom's favorite subject in college" (Appendix 36, Question 3). When completing reading assignments his parents read with him and made suggestions about what he could be thinking and predicting. After reading Christopher's pre-study assessment it

was obvious that his views corresponded with those of his parents in terms of celebrating literacy and completing activities together.

Literacy kit surveys Throughout the literacy kit surveys Christopher stated that his parents were very helpful with the assignments. They explained what was expected of him and assisted in “pointing out things that I might not have noticed” (Appendix 37, Question 2). In each of the literacy kit surveys Christopher answered the first question (How did this kit help you think about your reading and writing in the classroom?) similarly. He always mentioned making connections, even when the purpose of the literacy kit was not to make connections. I took this to mean that Christopher’s parents were always referring back to the strategies he learned in school. According to Christopher, his parents were generally very helpful in the completion of the literacy kits.

Student post-assessment survey Christopher stated that he spent about an hour each week working on the literacy kit activities. He wrote that he found it helpful working with his parents because the activities became more enjoyable; he also stated that he could ask his parents for help “because my mom’s smart” (Appendix 38, Question 3). Though Christopher and his parents worked diligently on these literacy kit assignments, his response echoed his parents in that he already knew the strategies that were presented and so did not become a stronger reader because of them. When asked if he thought using the literacy kits at home helped him become a stronger reader Christopher wrote, “Not really because I knew the strategies” (Appendix 38, Question 4).

Christopher responded positively to having his parents help with the literacy kits and general literacy assignments at home. Working with his parents made the activities more enjoyable and easier to complete and Christopher said that his parents were more than willing to help him. Though Christopher reported that he already knew all of the strategies that were presented in the kits, the extra practice can only strengthen his literacy capabilities.

Kristen

Student pre-assessment survey In the pre-assessment survey Kristen stated that she spent about twenty minutes daily working with her parents on reading and writing assignments for school. She enjoyed working with her parents over working alone because it “is super duper fun” (Appendix 39, Question 2). She wrote that her parents were always willing to help because they knew that sometimes she needed help. When asked for specific instances that her parents helped her Kristen wrote “they usually help by giving me pre-tests in spelling or answering any questions I ask them” (Appendix 39, Question 4). Kristen’s answers in the pre-assessment survey made it seem as though her parents were there if she asked for help but did not necessarily volunteer to work with her. This could stem from the fact that Kristen worked well independently and did not need to be reminded about staying on task.

Literacy kit surveys Kristen wrote in the literacy kit surveys that her parents were very helpful for each activity. They helped her read the books she found more difficult and asked her questions pertaining to the literacy kit topic. For the

literacy kit about choosing appropriate texts, Kristen stated that “they took me to the library and helped me choose out books” (Appendix 40, Question 2).

Student post-assessment survey In the post-assessment survey, Kristen stated that she and her parents spent between ten and twenty minutes each week working on the literacy kits. She also stated that though she found it fun to work with her parents at home, she did not necessarily think that it was helpful “because I learn a lot in school” (Appendix 41, Question 2). She wrote that she learned most of these strategies in school and so did not need her parents’ assistance outside of the classroom. Though Kristen did not necessarily need help from her parents, she knew that the strategies presented in the kits were helpful “because we do the things you would do in a literacy group” (Appendix 41, Question 4). She may not ask for help all the time, but Kristen wrote that she knew her parents would always be willing to lend a hand because they wanted her to learn a lot.

Kristen stated in the various surveys that she enjoyed working on activities more when her parents would help her but did not necessarily feel that their help was necessary because of the knowledge she retained from the classroom. The limited amount of support she received from her parents was probably also due to the independent attitude she had with school work. Since she was intrinsically motivated she did not need reminders to finish assignments or to stay on task.

Anthony

Student pre-assessment survey In his pre-assessment survey, Anthony stated that he would usually spend about thirty minutes working with his parents on

literacy activities each night. He wrote that he found it helpful to work with his parents because they “can help you read better” (Appendix 42, Question 2). Anthony stated that he could ask his mom for help because she “reads a lot of time” (Appendix 42, Question 3). Anthony also wrote that his parents helped him when he was struggling with something. Perhaps they encouraged him to work independently until it was necessary for him to have support on his assignments.

Literacy kit surveys In his literacy kit surveys, Anthony stated many instances in which his parents assisted him in completing the activities. His parents helped him read parts of the text that he found difficult, explained the purpose of each kit (finding the author’s purpose and choosing appropriate texts at the library) and reminded him of the connections that he could make to the texts. For example when asked about how his parents helped him, Anthony wrote that they “explained the different purposes why an author writes a story” and at the library “help me make my final decision” (Appendices 43 and 44, Question 3).

Student post-assessment survey In the post-assessment survey, Anthony wrote that he spent between ten and fifteen minutes each week working with his parents on the literacy kits. He wrote that he still believed that working with his parents was important because it made the activities easier and that his parents helped him because “it is easy for them (Appendix 45, Question 3). Anthony also wrote that using the literacy kits helped him become a stronger reader because “every time you read you get better” (Appendix 45, Question 4). Anthony not only benefited from working with his parents at home but from the extra support of the strategies presented in the literacy kits.

Throughout the progression of the surveys, Anthony wrote that he enjoyed working with his parents on the different kit activities and he felt that the help he received was valuable in the completion of the kits. Anthony was able to recite several instances in which his parents specifically helped him with the purpose of the kit and ways that they made the activities manageable, as in reading the more difficult passages.

Stacy

Student pre-assessment survey In her pre-assessment survey Stacy wrote that she spent a lot of time working with her parents on the literacy assignments that she received from her classroom teacher. She even wrote that “sometimes it’s a little bit too much!” (Appendix 46, Question 1). She said that their help was always valuable and that they were always willing to help her with a problem. She wrote that “it is helpful that my mom or dad is helping me with reading and math because I sometimes need help or do not understand it” (Appendix 46, Question 2).

Literacy kit surveys Throughout the literacy kit assessments Stacy wrote that her parents helped explain some of the literacy kit purposes and facilitated discussions about why the kit topic was important. She also wrote that the author’s purpose kit “helped me by thinking about my reading and writing in the classroom because I usually do that in there” (Appendix 47, Question 1). Stacy was the only student who suggested that there were changes with the literacy kits, suggesting that a checklist was added to the kit about choosing an appropriate text at the library.

Student post-assessment survey Stacy wrote in her post-assessment survey that she spent about twenty minutes each week working on the literacy kits with her parents. She still believed receiving help from her parents on literacy assignments was helpful. When asked why working with parents was helpful she wrote “I do because what if you did not know what to do?” (Appendix 48, Question 2). Though Stacy wrote that receiving help was important, when asked if the literacy kits helped her become a stronger reader she said “I do not because I am already a stronger reader” (Appendix 48, Question 4).

During the course of the literacy kit study Stacy reported receiving help from her parents on the kit activities. She wrote that assistance from her parents was always valuable because sometimes questions were too difficult for her to answer alone. She said that she knew her parents are always willing to help her because they loved her and wanted her to succeed.

Summary

Each of the student participants for this study had positive perceptions about their parents helping with literacy activities, including the kits for this study. Christopher and Kristen both found working with their parents to be fun; they did not necessarily find their parents’ help necessary all the time. Out of the four student participants, Christopher and Kristen were reading at the highest levels. Because of these achievements, Christopher and Kristen may not have needed as much support in their literacy assignments at home. Independent work habits probably had an impact on the way these students perceived activities completed with their parents. Since

these two students rarely needed help to complete grade level assignments, the extra support was just a fun treat and unnecessary.

Stacy and Anthony felt that the assistance they received was important in their reading and figuring out the correct answers. These two students, who were reading below grade level, realize that they needed extra support offered to them by their parents. They knew that working with their parents was more than just fun; it could offer the support they needed to complete assignments. Each student gave a positive response when asked about their perceptions of parents' comfort level on helping with literacy tasks. Since all four parents volunteered to be in a study about parent involvement in literacy activities, it makes sense that they are more than willing to help out their children when necessary.

Summary of Findings

In general, the strategies and tips presented in the literacy kits seemed to be more valuable to the student participants who were reading at lower levels and the parent participant who realized her child needed extra support. Anthony's mother named specific ways that the literacy kits may have helped her and instances in which she could use the strategies that were presented in the future. She was the most willing to reflect on her practices and find the points that may have needed to be further developed. Anthony and Stacy, who were reading below grade level, reported that working with their parents was beneficial when working on more difficult assignments. Though Stacy's parents believed that they were supporting her literacy

growth, they could reassess the methods they were using. According to the classroom teacher, if they were helping her at home it was not noticeable at school.

The parent participants who believed their children are reading at or above grade level did not notice as many changes in their abilities or perceptions to offer literacy support. The student participants who were reading above grade level were already practicing most of the skills that were presented in the literacy kits, and if they were not actively practicing the strategies they were at least aware of them. Christopher and Kristen both reported that working on assignments with their parents was fun, thus showing that they did not necessarily need the same amount of support as students who were reading below grade level.

All of the parents who agreed to participate in this literacy study were already somewhat involved in their child's scholastic lives, which may affect the amount that they took out of the kits. All of the participants, students and parents alike, believed that it was important for parents to be involved in the literacy growth of their children. It would be interesting to see how these kits, or activities of this kind, impacted families who are not involved in the scholastic lives of their children.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Throughout the course of this study, several themes emerged in the analysis of data from the four participating families. In general, the strategies and tips presented in the literacy kits seemed to be more valuable to the student participants who were reading at lower levels and their parents as well. The student participants who were reading above grade level were already practicing most of the skills that were presented in the literacy kits, and if they were not actively practicing the strategies they were at least aware of them. All of the parents who agreed to participate in this literacy study were very involved in their children's scholastic lives. This involvement may have affected the amount of learning that they took out of the kits. All of the participants, students and parents believed that it was important for parents to be involved in the literacy growth of their children.

Summary and Conclusions

After analyzing the data that I gathered throughout this study, I drew some conclusions about the impact of the literacy kits. The first question I asked was: What might parents learn about supporting their children's literacy learning when completing literacy projects at home with their children? My analysis led me to believe that the parents' learning was directly influenced by the level that their child was completing work, or the perception they had of the ability their child had as a literacy student. Christopher and Kristen were both students reading and completing

literacy activities above grade level. Because they were both intrinsically motivated, it was possible that they did not require a lot of extra help at home from their parents. According to Stacy's mother, she was providing effective support at home for Stacy's literacy growth. The classroom teacher stated that this support did not seem to be transferred to Stacy's literacy achievements at school. If Stacy's mother was already knowledgeable about the strategies addressed in the literacy kits as stated, Stacy may need alternate skills when working on reading comprehension. The parents of these three students all had similar responses on the parent surveys. Parents seemed to answer questions quickly and did not seem to gain much in terms of learning about the literacy skills that are practiced at school. Anthony's mother seemed the most willing to spend time working on the kits and analyzing what she was learning by using the strategies presented in the kits. She also was the participant who communicated the most with the classroom teacher. This data led me to the conclusion that the parent whose child would benefit from extra support was the most involved in the study. After studying the length and thoughtfulness of this parent's responses to the surveys, I concluded that she spent the most time working through the kits. Because of her child's struggle with literacy, Anthony's mother may have been more open to suggestions about supporting his growth at home. Since this study was drawn from such a small participant pool, it was impossible to generalize the findings to a larger scale. This specific study, however, may support the idea that parents who were less confident in their children's literacy growth may be more open to spending time revisiting strategies and spending extra time on activities outside of school.

The second question that I asked in this study was: How might using literacy kits with their children impact parents' views about their children's literacy learning? After looking at the data I collected I concluded that the literacy kits impacted participants' views about literacy education based on the level of success they believed their child was achieving. The parents of Christopher, Kristen, and Stacy all had the belief that their child was either on target or above level with her or his literacy education. If the student was not reading at grade level, as in Stacy's case, the parents still believed that they were offering her the support needed to bridge that gap. The parents of Christopher and Stacy reported that their views about their child's literacy learning were not impacted through the literacy kit activities, or else very minimally. Though Kristen's mother responded that her views about Kristen's literacy education had changed, she did not name specific ways in which they were impacted. Anthony's parent was the one who reported a positive change in her views of his literacy growth. She reported having deeper discussions with him while reading and asking about his thought processes and answers while he was answering questions for her. In conclusion, it seemed as if the parents' views did not change if they already believed their child was succeeding in school or that sufficient literacy support was already being offered at home. The parent participant who realized her son was in need of extra support was willing to reflect on her current literacy views and adapt them based on the new strategies and information presented in the literacy kits. Based on all of these observations it seems as though parents who were willing to accept that their child may need extra support in literacy activities were also willing to reflect on and change their ideas of what it meant to be a literacy learner.

The third question looked at in this study was: What are parents' perceptions of the assistance they provide their children with literacy kits at home? The three parents who believed that their children were reading at or above grade level did not show much change in their perceptions of themselves as support systems in literacy activities. Christopher and Stacy's parents wrote that they were already very confident in their ability to offer support to their children in literacy activities. Because of this pre-existing confidence they did not report any changes in their perceptions of the ability they had to offer support to their child. Kristen's mother reported that she felt comfortable helping her daughter at home on assignments but also responded that she learned some new strategies to use at home. Though the shift may have been small, Kristen's mother did have a more positive perception of her ability to offer assistance after completing the literacy kit activities. Anthony's mother felt as if she could help her child on literacy assignments but also realized that the activities sent home with Anthony were very different than what she was taught as a child. The literacy kit activities were a chance for her to be brought up to speed with the terms and strategies that are being used daily in the classroom. Anthony's mother definitely had a more positive perception of herself as a facilitator in her child's literacy growth after completing the study. In conclusion, it seemed as though the more positive a parents' perception was of themselves as literacy facilitators in the beginning of the study, the less their perceptions shifted. The parent participant who admitted that there were some missing pieces in her knowledge of classroom literacy practices reported gaining knowledge from the literacy kit activities. To generalize the finding of this question, the less confident a parent felt about helping

out his/her child on literacy activities, the more willing he might be to learn the strategies used in the classroom.

The final question discussed in this study was: What are students' responses to using literacy kits and working with their parents at home? In general all student participants responded favorably to working with their parents on the literacy kit activities and assignments at home. Christopher and Kristen both responded that working with their parents on the activities made the kits more fun. Kristen did report that she felt adult help was not necessary because she learned everything in school already. Stacy and Anthony wrote in their surveys that their parents were valuable to work with because they helped with the more difficult tasks. After looking through Anthony's answers in his survey it seemed as though his parents helped him think about the purpose of each kit instead of just helping him read the texts. In conclusion, the students who were actually achieving above grade level simply believed that it was more enjoyable working with their parents on activities instead of completing them alone. The two students who needed extra support both reported that the help from their parents was valuable in helping them with the more difficult tasks.

These findings and conclusions have made me realize that while all students could use a strong support system at home, each parent needs different support from the material going home from the classroom teacher (Egbert & Salsbury, 2009). In the same way that teachers individualize instruction in the classroom, parents need the opportunity to learn different support strategies based on their children's literacy achievements. The difference in learning levels and comprehension is seen in the classroom with leveled reading groups and the support that is offered within each of

these groups. When a teacher or district develops a reading program, it is taken into account that each student in a grade level will not be able to complete the same activities and assignments as his or her classmates. This approach to teaching needs to be mirrored in the support that is offered to parents and consequently students while they are not in the classroom. This differentiated support could be offered through the use of leveled literacy kits or home literacy activities (Richgels, & Wold, 1998; Barbour, 1998; Dever, & Burts, 2002). As seen in this study, the four parent participants achieved different levels of growth from the uniform kits that were sent home. Since the student participants were all at different levels in their literacy growth, they should all have received different activities and support for at home learning. In the future, kits could be sent home with opportunities for scaffolding the instruction. An alternate way to do so would be to develop different sets of literacy kits that correspond with reading levels within the classroom. As students progress in their literacy growth, they move up in the kit levels as well. With individualized literacy kits, students and parents would have a greater opportunity to benefit from the activities provided to them.

Some parents already have a firm grasp on the different literacy strategies that are used in the classroom. This prior knowledge may come from communication with the classroom teacher or from older children that have already been through the school system. These parents would probably not need to begin with the basics of literacy strategies but may only need suggestions about how to extend reading activities and scaffold more complex thinking. Crawford and Zygrouis-Coe (2006) detailed various ways to include literacy practices in everyday activities. Students

who are proficient with literacy in the classroom should begin spending time linking literacy to their life at home. One example of this literacy enhancement is to introduce the use of reading through activities like cooking or other activities that require directions. Students can read from a cookbook or instruction manual to help a parent with step-by-step directions on completing a task. With an activity such as this, students see how important it is to comprehend what they are reading in order to reach a goal and complete a task. When students are surrounded by literacy they will be reminded how important it is to take care when reading and comprehending texts.

Some parents may not have a strong understanding of the strategies that are used in literacy activities at school. These parents may want to offer the support their child needs, but just don't know how to do so (Waldbart, et al., 2006). In the study and subsequent research conducted by Waldbart, et al., parents and guardians were provided with specific steps and strategies on how to support their children at home. Parents who do not know about the classroom literacy practices may need to start learning about the basics of these strategies before they can confidently and successfully begin offering support at home. It is necessary for the classroom teacher or other school professional to offer the guidelines and support to parents so they can in turn support their children.

In order to find out how to support the parents in a classroom, the teacher should become aware of the home practices of the families in his or her classroom (Senechal, 2006a). Just as parents are expected to be familiar with the classroom practices, teachers should be knowledgeable about the literacy practices that happen at home. This information could be gathered through methods such as surveys or

literacy activities (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006). Literacy activities could include reading together, writing a story, or keeping a journal. Such activities could give teachers an idea of how often a child is read to at home or to see how large a role literacy activities play in daily home life. Parent-teacher communication can also be opened up through the use of journals or online blogging, as long as these methods can be accessed and used by both parents and teachers. Once the areas of need and interest are known, the classroom teacher can effectively put together literacy kits or other home-school activities that offer support to families.

In order for these kits to be effective, parents need to realize that their child may need more support at home than they are currently receiving and receive the support appropriate for their child. I believe that the work of my study would have been more successful if I had thought to develop leveled kits or opportunities for more advanced readers. In this particular study, the majority of student participants were reading at or above grade level. Because of their achievements in reading, the strategies in the literacy kits were already being implemented at home and automatically when reading at school. This particular study was aimed toward struggling readers who needed extra support at home but the participant pool was not necessarily made up of struggling readers. This meant that the kits may not have been a good match for the particular participants. In the future, I would be sure to individualize (as much as possible) the literacy support that is sent home to families. Some families may need to start at the basics of supporting their readers, while other families may be looking for ways to enhance their child's already blossoming reading strategies.

A way to create a few kits that could be used with a range of learners would be to branch out from traditional texts and activities. By cutting out a traditional text, one eliminates the exclusion of struggling readers or the boredom of advanced readers. Activities that include open-ended literacy growth can be more easily scaffolded to different leveled readers. One example of using literacy strategies without a specific text includes using a photograph as a basis of a parent-child interview (Egbert & Salsbury, 2009). Students can choose a baby picture of themselves or their parents and develop questions to be used in an interview setting. The questions and answers from the interview can then be developed into a writing piece to be displayed in the classroom. In this specific activity, students are developing questions and their ability to make inferences as well as engage in the writing process as part of an authentic activity. This type of activity encourages students to make inferences and summarize, among other important literacy strategies. Including activities such as this, with limited traditional texts, can give students the opportunity to build a sense of community and partnership in their literacy education, much like a shared reading experience. Students who do not usually work together because of different reading levels can partner together for the editing and peer sharing portions of the writing process.

As I reflected on the use of these specific literacy kits in this study, I realized that I did not address the needs of many individual students but instead focused on the needs of the struggling readers in the classroom. This hindered the study because the participants themselves were not all struggling readers and so did not all benefit from the kits. With the opportunity for leveled kits, every student in the classroom could

have the opportunity to work with parents at home in a way that would be beneficial. Higher level kits could include chapter books and more intensive activities, such as journaling or deeper comprehension questions.

Recommendations

I would recommend that future researchers work with a larger participant group. The pool of participants should be more varied, as three of the four parent participants I used had very positive perceptions about their abilities to support their children with literacy activities. In a larger participant group there would be more chance for parents who have varied perceptions of their abilities to support their child and different achievement levels of the student participants. In a larger study my findings would be able to be expanded and I could make more generalizations about the findings.

I would also recommend that future researchers have a method to gather information about the student and parent participants before beginning the study, therefore being able to focus on themes and patterns that emerge in regard to achievement and participation levels. I think that having a strong base knowledge of the backgrounds of the participants would make it easier to compare their answers in each literacy kit survey and the pre- and post-assessments. This would be especially easy if a classroom teacher were to implement a literacy kit study much like this one. This problem could be resolved with a more detailed and thorough pre-assessment survey in which parents not only answered questions about their conceptions of

literacy but also shared the ways they communicated with teachers and how they saw their child as a reader (Dever & Burts, 2002).

Many researchers stated that in past studies of a similar nature they would use themes in each kit (Betterton & Ensworth, 2006; Dever, & Burts, 2002; Barbour, 1998). Each text and activity in the kit corresponded to the same theme. Theme examples from Barbour's study include "shapes and shadows" and "under construction". With a themed literacy kit, participants could choose to read some of the texts or all of the texts and manipulate the activities to fit the different leveled readers. Using a few books of the same theme could also provide participants with opportunities to make connections between texts and draw on prior knowledge to help them retain meaning.

I would recommend that in the future practitioners use a leveled set of literacy kits that can be geared toward the different learners in a classroom. In my study the parents of higher level participants did not change much in their ideas and practices. Higher leveled students may not need the specific strategies found in these literacy kits but they may benefit from literature circles and extended projects. As students continue to develop as literacy learners, they need to be presented with new challenges. Many of the articles that I read pertaining to literacy kits had multiple texts inside each kit so that students could choose the book most appropriate for them (Richgels, & Wold, 1998; Barbour, 1998; Dever, & Burts, 2002)

I would also recommend that the literacy kits be targeted toward parents who do not participate regularly in the classroom and may not be familiar with the literacy practices that are happening daily. These parents could be among the participants

who learn the most as they are presented specific strategies and ideas on how to help their child. In one study Dever & Burts (2002) wrote that one way to reach all families is to just send home the literacy bags to them. The literacy bags in this study all contained high-quality books and enrichment activities. They wrote that “this simple strategy for supporting literacy development is one way to reach all types of families, even those who typically do not participate in school based events” (p. 361). The idea behind this strategy seems to be that if parents are simply given the materials they are more likely to participate in the activities. In addition to receiving the materials necessary to work at home, Richgels and Wold (1998) wrote that parents also need direction in carrying out these activities. Parents do not automatically know how to provide the support and direction that their children need. Educators need to “explicitly direct parents in possible opportunities for spoken or written language experience” (Richgels & Wold, 1998, p. 19). This instruction could be included in introduction letters that come with each activity sent home. General directions for home literacy could be sent home in weekly newsletters or posted on the classroom website, as long as the information was provided to each family.

I think that in the future literacy kits could be a way to bring families and teachers together so that literacy education is a joint endeavor. Literacy kits can help participants become familiar with the terms and concepts that are used daily in the classroom so students have a smooth transition between the instruction they receive from parents and teachers. Generally, parents responded positively to the ideas behind the literacy kits; many parents felt that the kits would provide more instruction for parents who were not already involved in their child’s literacy education. I have

also concluded that parent participants need to be aware of what their child is achieving in school so they can focus on the areas that need extra support.

Appendix 1: Parent Participant Pre-Study Survey

Literacy Kit Study- Pre-assessment for Parents

1. How would you describe your knowledge of the literacy practices in your child's classroom?
2. How prepared do you feel to help your child with literacy assignments and activities at home?
3. What strategies do you use when helping your child with different literacy activities? (Reading aloud, writing a story, etc.)
4. Do you think that working with your child at home helps them succeed with literacy education in the classroom? Why or why not?
5. Do you think that working with your child on specific literacy strategies will be beneficial to them in the future? Why or why not?

Appendix 2: Directions for Making Connections Literacy Kit

Dear Parents,

Thank you again for taking time to spend working on these literacy kits with your child. This literacy kit focuses on the skill of making connections while reading. When readers make connections with a text they are increasing their ability to comprehend and retain new information. Making connections is an important skill for your child to practice frequently until it becomes an automatic response during reading.

The connections are broken into three different categories: self to text, text to text, and world to text. The self to text connection involves the reader comparing an event in the book to his or her own experiences. Books in the classroom are often geared to remind students of an event in their life or something that could happen to them, making this connection an easy one to practice frequently. A text to text connection involves the reader making a connection to a different book they have read. These connections are easiest to practice if your child is interested in a certain topic or with non-fiction books. World to text connections involve the reading connecting the text with an event or experience that does not deal with them personally. This could include a story about a family member or friend or even a movie your child has seen.

While reading with your child it may be helpful for you to make connections of your own as an example. Some phrases that can be used are: This part reminds me of... I remember when I.... Another book I've read says... It may be helpful if you skim through the book prior to reading it with your child.

The graphic organizer included with this kit will help your child organize the connections they are making. Your child is encouraged to make at least one of each connection, hopefully more! If you find that your child is losing comprehension because of stopping to write, please fill out the sheet for them. Making connections is an important part of comprehension but should not be slowing your child down.

Making connections can be a skill that you practice with your child in any book that you read together. As your child continues to practice this skill it will only get easier and become more automatic.

Thank you!
Jillian Fisher

Making Connections

Use this sheet to help you record your connections! Try to make at least one self-to-text connection, one text-to-text connection, and one world-to-text connection.

Type of Connection	Page Number	Describe the connection you've made
Self to Text		
Text to Text		
World to Text		

Appendix 4: Directions for Making Inferences Literacy Kit

Dear Parents,

Thank you again for taking time to spend working on these literacy kits with your child. This literacy kit focuses on the skill of making inferences within a text. When readers make inferences they are increasing their ability to comprehend the text. Making inferences is an important skill for your child to practice frequently until it becomes an automatic response during reading.

Inferences are made when a reader looks beyond the initial meaning of the text, using clues from the author about what the deeper meaning might be. Making inferences is easiest to practice with books that have a complex plot. Sometimes it is difficult for students to work on making inferences if the book is too difficult; it is easiest to work on one skill at a time until they become more automatic.

While reading with your child it may be helpful for you to make inferences of your own as an example. Some phrases that can be used are: Maybe the character is thinking of this... I wonder if the author means.... Perhaps the father acted that way because... It may be helpful if you skim through the book prior to reading it with your child.

Making inferences can be a skill that you practice with your child in any book you read together, but may be easiest with stories that have a more complex plot. As your child continues to practice this skill it will only get easier and become more automatic.

Thank you!
Jillian Fisher

Appendix 5: Directions for Main Idea Literacy Kit

Dear Parents,

Thank you again for taking time to spend working on these literacy kits with your child. This literacy kit focuses figuring out the main idea of a story. When readers can figure out the main idea, they are better able to comprehend the basic meaning of the story. Figuring out the main idea is an important skill for your child to practice frequently until it becomes an automatic response after reading.

The main idea sums up a chunk of the text. Readers can find the main idea of a paragraph, page, or even the whole story. It may be easier to begin with a paragraph and move to longer passages.

While reading with your child it may be helpful for you to think aloud about the main idea of a paragraph to use as an example. Some phrases that can be used are: This paragraph sums up... This page was about... The book talked about...

For this kit please talk about the main idea of a few paragraphs of the story. Please choose the paragraphs as you see fit. At the end of the story please talk with your child about the main idea of the entire story.

Figuring out the main idea can be a skill that you practice with your child after any book that you read together. As your child continues to practice this skill it will only get easier to figure out at different points in the story.

Thank you!
Jillian Fisher

Appendix 6: Directions for Library Visit Literacy Kit

Dear Parents,

Thank you again for choosing to spend time working on these literacy kits with your child. This literacy kit focuses on choosing different books at the library with your child. Visiting a library is important because it gives your child many opportunities to look for different books and try out various genres. As your child is exposed to different kinds of books it will become easier and more enjoyable to read at home and school.

When your child knows how to choose books that are at the right reading level, reading will be more of a pleasure than a chore. If your child is planning on reading a book independently it is important that the text is not too difficult and frustrating. A common way for your child to choose an appropriate book is for them to open to a random page and read. If they find five or more words that are unfamiliar to them, the book is too difficult.

It is also important to read aloud with your child. If you plan on reading books with your child they can be a little more difficult since you will be there to help. Reading more difficult books can help maintain your child's interest since harder books usually have more complex plots and more developed characters. It is also helpful for your child to listen to you read and hear your phrasing as a fluent reader. Students can work on their comprehension while they listen to you read instead of laboring on decoding the words.

For this specific literacy kit I ask that you bring your child to the library to choose some entertaining books. Please choose both books that your child can read alone and that you can read together!

Being comfortable with your public library is something that will benefit your child as he or she continues to move through the school system. It will be easier to choose texts to help with reports and books to read just for fun!

Thank you!
Jillian Fisher

Appendix 7: Directions for Author's Purpose Literacy Kit

Dear Parents,

Thank you again for taking time to spend time working on these literacy kits with your child! This literacy kit focuses on the skill of determining the author's purpose. When readers can determine the author's purpose for writing they are increasing their ability to make inferences and draw conclusions.

Figuring out an author's purpose gives students a look into the meaning behind a text. This can give students a purpose for reading or assist them in choosing appropriate texts for an assignment. For example, if your child is writing a report they will be better able to choose a book that will be helpful; a book that was written to inform the reader. Your child may also connect author's purpose into their own writing. Once this skill is mastered your child will be able to think about the reasons he writes.

When your child is thinking about the author's purpose, have him/her think about the acronym PIE. PIE stands for Persuade, Inform, and Entertain; these represent the different purposes that authors may be aiming for. An author writes to persuade in order to get the reader to accept his ideas. An author writes to inform to share his knowledge with the reader. An author writes to entertain just to create books that are fun to read!

For this literacy kit, please discuss with your child the different purposes authors may use and why they are important. After reading the book with your child you can talk about why the author wrote it and for what reasons someone might have to read it.

Determining the author's purpose can be a strategy that you practice with your child in any book that you read together. It is a relatively easy idea and doesn't necessarily require much discussion. As your child continues to practice this skill it will only get easier and become more automatic.

Thank you!
Jillian Fisher

Appendix 8: Parent Participant Post-Study Survey

Literacy Kit Study-Post-assessment for Parents

1. Do you think that your knowledge of the literacy practices in your child's classroom increased through the use of literacy kits? If so, how?

2. Do you feel better prepared to help your child with literacy assignments and activities at home?

3. Did you learn any strategies to use when helping your child with different literacy activities? (Reading aloud, writing a story, etc.)

4. Do you think that working with your child at home helps them succeed with literacy education in the classroom? Why or why not?

5. How did working with specific literacy strategies change the way you worked with your child at home?

Appendix 9: Student Participant Pre-Study Survey

Literacy Kit Study- Pre-assessment for Students

1. How much time do you spend working with your parents on your reading and writing homework?
2. Do you think that it is helpful when you work with your parents at home with your reading? Why or why not?
3. Do you think that your parents are comfortable helping you with your reading homework? Why or why not?
4. How does your parent usually help you when you are working together at home?

Appendix 10: Classroom Teacher Pre-Study Survey

Literacy Kit Study- Pre-assessment for Teachers

1. What would you say about the families in your classroom regarding parent participation in student literacy activities?

2. Are there differences in parent participation based on the level they are familiar with classroom literacy practices? If so, what are they?

3. What do you think would happen to students' literacy growth if parents were given specific strategies to work on at home?

4. Do you think parents who participate in this study will continue their use of specific strategies when helping their child at home in the future?

Appendix 11: Student Participant Post-Study Assessment

Literacy Kit Study- Post-assessment for Students

1. How much time did you spend working with your parents on the literacy kits each week?
2. Do you think that it is helpful when you work with your parents at home with your reading? Why or why not?
3. Do you think that your parents are comfortable helping you with your reading homework? Why or why not?
4. Do you think that using the literacy kits at home helped you become a stronger reader? Why or why not?

Appendix 12: Classroom Teacher Post-Study Assessment

Literacy Kit Study- Post-assessment for Teachers

1. Did you notice any changes in the study participants regarding parent participation in student literacy activities?
2. Are there differences in parent participation based on the level they are familiar with classroom literacy practices? If so, what are they?
3. Do you think that the concept of literacy kits could be useful in your classroom in the future?
4. Are there any changes you would like to see before using literacy kits in the future?

Appendix 13: Student Participant Post-Kit Survey

Post Kit Survey for Students

Name: _____

Literacy Kit: _____

1. How did this kit help you think about your reading and writing in the classroom?
2. How did your parents help you with the activity in this literacy kit?
3. What could be changed about this literacy kit to make it more helpful in the future?

Appendix 14: Parent Participant Post-Kit Survey

Post-Kit Survey for Parents

Name: _____

Literacy Kit: _____

1. How useful did you find the activity in this kit?
2. How did this kit expand your knowledge of the literacy learning that happens in your child's classroom?
3. How might you use the information learned from this literacy kit in the future when helping your child read?
4. What else could be included in this literacy kit that would be more effective for you and your child?

Appendix 15: Analysis Coding Chart

Research Questions vs. data collection	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4
Pre-assessment	Question 3	Question 4	Question 1 & 2	General
Kit Surveys	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Literacy Kit Surveys as whole
Post-Assessments	Questions 2 & 3	Questions 1 & 5	Questions 4 & 5	General

Appendix 16: Kit Findings Matrix

The Memory Coat by Elvira Woodruff (Making Connections)

Student	Thinking about your reading and writing	How did parents help	What changes could be made	How useful did you find the activity in this kit?	How did this kit expand your knowledge of the literacy learning?	How might you use this info in future?	What else could be included?
Kristen	It helped me with connections	They read to me	Nothing. It is good!	Useful-gives a purpose to reading the story by making connections	Don't know.	Make connections with the story with my daughter, with the world, etc.	Don't know.
Christopher	Since we made connections.	She pointed things out that I might not have noticed	?	It provided the opportunity to discuss the impact that illness and war have on people.	It really didn't	We always try to make connections when reading	It is great for parents to understand the literacy learning that takes place in the classroom. The skills presented in these kits have been integrated into literacy learning from the beginning. I feel these kits would be extremely

							helpful in a first or second grade reading level, to help parents understanding and students with building these skills. Although the kids are constantly building on these skills, by third grade, I would hope parents are aware of this literacy skill set. (If a parent isn't involved at this point-chances are they won't be in the future)
Stacy/ Candace	It taught me some new connections	My mom helped me read the book	To make the book easier	Very useful	Explained what text to text was	To use in my explanation when helping her to understand and the homework instructions	The book was a little hard for her, I had to do a lot of the reading

Anthony							
Emily							

The Saturday Adventure By Sally Prue (Making Inferences)

Emily	It didn't help me	They didn't	Make the book age appropriate	Slightly	It didn't expand my knowledge	I don't think I would	A book that is more appropriate to her reading level
Anthony	In music class we have to think ahead and look ahead	My mom reminded me of when I made a reflection with a mirror	Nothing this is a good literacy kit	Very useful	This kit helped me see how Anthony makes predictions while reading and how he relates to the text while thinking of his real life situation	I may remind him of similar situations our family has had to the text	I don't think anything else is necessary for this kit
Kristen	It doesn't help me as much as when I'm in the classroom	By discussing my answers	Write specific questions to deal with inferencing and the book	It helps her to predict what will happen using context clues in the story	She is currently making inferences in her literacy group	Ask her more questions about what she thinks will happen	Make up specific questions that deal with inferencing and the actual book
Stacy	I can do it in the classrooms	They explained inferenc	To number the kits	50/50. Stacy now knows	0	Ask more questions during reading	The kit was complete

		e		what the word inference means			
Christopher	Because we make connections like this in school	By asking questions	?	We had fun with it, but we already practice this skill almost daily	It really didn't expand my knowledge of the learning in school, as I feel we have a pretty good handle on literacy skills employed at school	I really didn't feel we learned anything from doing it, however, I feel these skills are crucial for kids to become critical thinkers and make connections to the text	Nothing.

The Ice Man by Marijo Moore (Main Idea)

Anthony	In our classroom we have to figure out the main idea of a book or story	They helped me read some of it	A different story	Somewhat useful	I learned about packets and worksheets that Anthony works on at school where he has multiple choice questions to select the main idea of passages	I may break down the book into smaller parts to help my child understand the main idea of a story	Nothing
---------	---	--------------------------------	-------------------	-----------------	---	---	---------

					or stories		
Stacy	Because I usually read a book and answer questions in the classroom	They helped me by helping me understand the questions	To let us know what to do more	Useful	It let me know that the students don't just have to read them but know what books are about	I'll ask her to tell me the main story of the book	Nothing I could think of
Christopher				We enjoyed it	It really didn't	To assist with the thinking about the possible meaning conveyed via the main idea	Nothing
Kristen/Candace	I learned about the main idea	We talked about the main idea	I don't know	Stopping and discussing each page helped her retain better	Gave another way to help her understand	When she starts the "I don't get it" whine to go back and do page by page main idea	
Emily							

Library visit

Emily	I could probably choose more difficult books in the classroom	They took me to the library and helped me choose appropriate books	I would know what books are appropriate	Semi, as we are familiar with the library	We are in the classroom often so we have a pretty good idea of how the	This should aid her in being able to choose appropriate books	Nothing
-------	---	--	---	---	--	---	---------

					classroom works		
Anthony	I think about books that I've already read that I liked	My parents help me make my final decision	Nothing	Somewhat useful	It helped me see how he chooses his books	I will know if his book is the appropriate level for him	Nothing
Kristen	I don't know	They brought me to the library and helped me choose out books	By asking them how the books helped with reading	It's fun going to the library with our children	It's hard to say, I guess we're reinforcing literacy skills in the classroom	What were we supposed to learn? I wasn't too sure	More specific questions, topics that we are parents need to look for, guidelines
Stacy	I'm doing a lot better	We talk about the library	To have a checklist	Honestly, a lot of work. We go through a lot with Stacy so the trip was just one more thing we have a ton of books at home	We have to help her everyday	More of a kit checklist	
Christopher							

Little Blue, Big Blue by Malachy Doyle (Authors purpose)

Stacy	It helped me by thinking	Mom explained PIE					
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	about my reading and writing in the classroom because I usually do that in there						
Christopher	Because we make connections	She explained what is and was happening		We enjoyed discussing the meaning of the story	It really didn't	It may be useful to develop potential discussions about different meanings in the text	Not sure
Anthony	Authors write books for a purpose	My parents explained the different purposes why an author writes a story	More space on the paper to write	Very useful. It helped me explain to my son and for him to understand why there are so many books to choose from to read and why people read.	This kit helped show me his understanding of fiction/nonfiction stories	I may use this information in the future when assisting my child or critiquing his writing assignments	I don't think anything else is needed
Kristen	By the books we read together	By reading some of the pages	Make it a little more challenging	It helped us to discuss the author's	It helps me to be able to have literary discussions with my	We could discuss the author's purpose	We talked about the author's

		when I got tired		purpose for writing this book. Kristen said it was informati onal but in an entertaini ng way	child when we read books	as we read more books together	s purpos e for writing the book, but there really wasn't any questi ons related to it
Emily							

Appendix 17: Christopher's Parent Pre-Assessment

Christopher 3/4

Literacy Kit Study- Pre-assessment for Parents

1. How would you describe your knowledge of the literacy practices in your child's classroom?

I feel I have a good understanding of the literacy practices through the material presented at curriculum night, and certainly based on the material he brings home.

2. How prepared do you feel to help your child with literacy assignments and activities at home?

I feel very prepared. I have always loved reading and writing, and enjoy helping him with assignments and activities.

3. What strategies do you use when helping your child with different literacy activities? (Reading aloud, writing a story, etc.)

We read a book together as a family every night. At the end of each chapter, we always discuss what we read; including the plot, characters and setting. We have fun talking about other outcomes, meanings, etc.

4. Do you think that working with your child at home helps them succeed with literacy education in the classroom? Why or why not?

Absolutely! When parents are involved with the various aspects of literacy education, not only does it give us ^{an idea of} parents' our kids may need help, but we are also able to spend more time on different concepts, connections, and sets a good example for them.

5. Do you think that working with your child on specific literacy strategies will be beneficial to them in the future? Why or why not?

Yes, because we employ different literacy strategies in everyday life. It also helps a child to be a critical thinker and problem solve, which is crucial as an adult.

3/9

Post-Kit Survey for Parents

Name: Shanir/Christopher (aden)

Literacy Kit: Inferences

1. How useful did you find the activity in this kit?

We had fun with it, but we already practice these skills almost daily.

2. How did this kit expand your knowledge of the literacy learning that happens in your child's classroom?

It really didn't expand my knowledge of the learning in school, as I feel we have a pretty good handle on literacy skills he employed at school.

3. How might you use the information learned from this literacy kit in the future when helping your child read?

I really don't feel we learned anything from doing it; however, I feels these skills are crucial for kids to become critical thinkers and make connections to text.

4. What else could be included in this literacy kit that would be more effective for you and your child?

Nothing.

Appendix 19: Christopher's Parent Assessment of Making Connections Literacy Kit

Post-Kit Survey for Parents

Name:

Literacy Kit:

Shannon Bailey
Christopher

3111

1. How useful did you find the activity in this kit?

It provided the opportunity to discuss the impact that illness and war have on people.

2. How did this kit expand your knowledge of the literacy learning that happens in your child's classroom?

It really didn't.

3. How might you use the information learned from this literacy kit in the future when helping your child read?

We always try to make connections when reading.

4. What else could be included in this literacy kit that would be more effective for you and your child?

It is great for parents to understand the literacy learning taking place in the classroom. The skills presented in these kits have been integrated into literacy learning from the beginning. I feel these kits →

would be extremely useful at a first or second grade reading level, to help parents ^{understanding} and students with ^{building} these skills. Although the kids are constantly building on these skills, by third grade, I would hope parents are aware of this literacy skill set. (If a parent isn't involved at this point - chances are - they won't be in the future.)

Appendix 20: Christopher's Parent Post-Study Assessment

Literacy Kit Study-Post-assessment for Parents

Christopher

1. Do you think that your knowledge of the literacy practices in your child's classroom increased through the use of literacy kits? If so, how?

Not really, because we are kept pretty well informed, and work with our son, by reading together daily. I do feel they would be a great help if used prior to the concept.

2. Do you feel better prepared to help your child with literacy assignments and activities at home?

I already felt prepared.

3. Did you learn any strategies to use when helping your child with different literacy activities? (Reading aloud, writing a story, etc.)

No.

4. Do you think that working with your child at home helps them succeed with literacy education in the classroom? Why or why not?

Absolutely! It creates more interest, excitement, provides encouragement and makes them want to succeed more, when parents are involved.

5. How did working with specific literacy strategies change the way you worked with your child at home?

We already employed the reading strategies. I feel these kits may be very beneficial to parents who may not normally read and work with their kids.

I definitely feel the activities would be of great value to all families, if they were used in first or 2nd grade, when various reading strategies are first introduced.

Good luck Jillian

Appendix 21: Kristen's Parent Pre-Assessment

Kristen 3/17

Literacy Kit Study- Pre-assessment for Parents

1. How would you describe your knowledge of the literacy practices in your child's classroom? Good to very good

2. How prepared do you feel to help your child with literacy assignments and activities at home? Prepared

3. What strategies do you use when helping your child with different literacy activities? (Reading aloud, writing a story, etc.) Reading aloud, buddy reading, predicting (inferencing), checking for comprehension.

4. Do you think that working with your child at home helps them succeed with literacy education in the classroom? Why or why not? YES I believe working with my child helps them succeed because she enjoys to read to me or listen to me read to her. It helps with her vocabulary and comprehension skills as well.

5. Do you think that working with your child on specific literacy strategies will be beneficial to them in the future? Why or why not?

Yes I think it's beneficial to my child because any reinforcement helps a child in any area and they also see the importance of it if you put forth the effort as well.

3/4

Post-Kit Survey for Parents

Name: KristenLiteracy Kit: Little Blue, Big Blue

1. How useful did you find the activity in this kit?

It helped us to discuss the author's purpose for writing this book. Kayla said it was for informational but in an entertaining way.

2. How did this kit expand your knowledge of the literacy learning that happens in your child's classroom?

It helps me to be able to have literary discussions with my child when we read books.

3. How might you use the information learned from this literacy kit in the future when helping your child read?

We could discuss the author's purpose as we read more books together.

4. What else could be included in this literacy kit that would be more effective for you and your child?

We talked about the author's purpose for writing the book, but there really wasn't any question relating to it.

Post-Kit Survey for Parents

Name: Kristen 4/8

Literacy Kit: Connections

1. How useful did you find the activity in this kit? useful gives a purpose to reading the story by making connections.
2. How did this kit expand your knowledge of the literacy learning that happens in your child's classroom? Don't know.
3. How might you use the information learned from this literacy kit in the future when helping your child read? make connections with the story with my daughter, with the world, etc.
4. What else could be included in this literacy kit that would be more effective for you and your child? Don't know

Appendix 24: Kristen's Parent Post-Study Assessment

Kristen

Literacy Kit Study-Post-assessment for Parents

1. Do you think that your knowledge of the literacy practices in your child's classroom increased through the use of literacy kits? If so, how? *yes- it helped to reinforce what I was already doing and gave me some new strategies to try as well.*
2. Do you feel better prepared to help your child with literacy assignments and activities at home? *yes*
3. Did you learn any strategies to use when helping your child with different literacy activities? (Reading aloud, writing a story, etc.) *making connections*
4. Do you think that working with your child at home helps them succeed with literacy education in the classroom? Why or why not? *yes*
5. How did working with specific literacy strategies change the way you worked with your child at home? *It helped me to reinforce the literacy strategies they use at school here at home as well.*

Appendix 25: Anthony's Parent Pre-Assessment

Anthony

Literacy Kit Study- Pre-assessment for Parents

1. How would you describe your knowledge of the literacy practices in your child's classroom?

very different - we didn't have all this fancy stuff -

2. How prepared do you feel to help your child with literacy assignments and activities at home?

no problem - I love to read and hope to pass that love on to my kids

3. What strategies do you use when helping your child with different literacy activities? (Reading aloud, writing a story, etc.)

We have read aloud since birth to them. Also we do a lot of sound out the word

4. Do you think that working with your child at home helps them succeed with literacy education in the classroom? Why or why not?

Definitely! Repeat, repeat was the way we learned

5. Do you think that working with your child on specific literacy strategies will be beneficial to them in the future? Why or why not?

Probably as long as there is an explanation of what this specific skill is. The mums probably taught me all these strategies but we didn't call them "specific literacy strategies" - just reading class

3/11

Post-Kit Survey for Parents

Name: Anthony

Literacy Kit: Little Blue Big Blue authors purpose

1. How useful did you find the activity in this kit? Very useful. It helped me explain to my son and for him to understand why there are so many books to choose from to read and why people read.
2. How did this kit expand your knowledge of the literacy learning that happens in your child's classroom? This kit helped show me his understanding of fiction / Non-fiction stories.
3. How might you use the information learned from this literacy kit in the future when helping your child read? I may use this information in the future when assisting my child or critiquing his writing assignments
4. What else could be included in this literacy kit that would be more effective for you and your child? I don't think anything else is needed.

4/8

Post-Kit Survey for Parents

Name: Anthony

Literacy Kit: figuring out the main idea of a story

1. How useful did you find the activity in this kit?

Somewhat useful.

2. How did this kit expand your knowledge of the literacy learning that happens in your child's classroom?

I learned about packets and worksheets that adam works on at school where he has multiple choice questions to select the main idea of passages or stories.

3. How might you use the information learned from this literacy kit in the future when helping your child read?

I may break down the book into smaller parts to help my child understand the main idea of a story.

4. What else could be included in this literacy kit that would be more effective for you and your child?

nothing

Appendix 28: Anthony's Parent Post-Study Assessment

Anthony

Literacy Kit Study-Post-assessment for Parents

1. Do you think that your knowledge of the literacy practices in your child's classroom increased through the use of literacy kits? If so, how?

Yes, my knowledge definitely increased because I was able to see how he processes and comprehends what he reads by seeing the different strategies he uses.

2. Do you feel better prepared to help your child with literacy assignments and activities at home?

yes a little bit.

3. Did you learn any strategies to use when helping your child with different literacy activities? (Reading aloud, writing a story, etc.)

yes, talking about why an author wrote the story really helps him understand the purpose and the content of the book.

4. Do you think that working with your child at home helps them succeed with literacy education in the classroom? Why or why not?

yes, working with him at home helps reinforce strategies and it also makes him enjoy reading and writing more because it becomes a fun activity to do with your child.

5. How did working with specific literacy strategies change the way you worked with your child at home?

Some of the literacy strategies made me sit back and see how he retained the information because as he answered the questions he told me how he got his results. It was interesting seeing the strategies he used.

Appendix 29: Stacy's Parent Pre-Assessment

Stacy 3A

Literacy Kit Study- Pre-assessment for Parents

1. How would you describe your knowledge of the literacy practices in your child's classroom?

Great, I communicate a lot with Ms. Ferris.

2. How prepared do you feel to help your child with literacy assignments and activities at home?

Very prepared -

3. What strategies do you use when helping your child with different literacy activities? (Reading aloud, writing a story, etc.)

- a white (erase) board
- read aloud

4. Do you think that working with your child at home helps them succeed with literacy education in the classroom? Why or why not?

Yes, it is the one-on-one added support Savannah needs. It works -

5. Do you think that working with your child on specific literacy strategies will be beneficial to them in the future? Why or why not?

Yes. Knowing what she is doing or not doing always helps. This way we can always work on things, now - and later.

Post-Kit Survey for Parents

Name: Stacy

3/4

Literacy Kit: library

1. How useful did you find the activity in this kit?

honestly → a lot of work - we go through a lot with Savannah so... the trip to the library was just

2. How did this kit expand your knowledge of the literacy learning that happens in your child's classroom?

Ø

3. How might you use the information learned from this literacy kit in the future when helping your child read?

We have to help her everyday -

4. What else could be included in this literacy kit that would be more effective for you and your child?

more of a "kit" check list etc...

Appendix 31: Stacy's Parent Post-Assessment

Stacy

4/11/10

Literacy Kit Study-Post-assessment for Parents

1. Do you think that your knowledge of the literacy practices in your child's classroom increased through the use of literacy kits? If so, how? \emptyset
2. Do you feel better prepared to help your child with literacy assignments and activities at home?
no
3. Did you learn any strategies to use when helping your child with different literacy activities? (Reading aloud, writing a story, etc.) no
4. Do you think that working with your child at home helps them succeed with literacy education in the classroom? Why or why not? absolutely - it re-inforces the skills learned in school.
It is the combo that works best & saved
5. How did working with specific literacy strategies change the way you worked with your child at home? \emptyset

Good luck and congrats!

3/11

Post-Kit Survey for Parents

Name: Kristen

Literacy Kit: Library Trip

1. How useful did you find the activity in this kit?

It's fun going to the library with our children.

2. How did this kit expand your knowledge of the literacy learning that happens in your child's classroom?

It's hard to say, I guess reinforcing literacy skills in the classroom.

3. How might you use the information learned from this literacy kit in the future when helping your child read?

What were we suppose to learn? I wasn't to sure.

4. What else could be included in this literacy kit that would be more effective for you and your child?

more specific questions, topics that we as parents need to look for. Guidelines

4/11

Post-Kit Survey for Parents

Name: Anthony

Literacy Kit: making inferences

1. How useful did you find the activity in this kit?

Very useful

2. How did this kit expand your knowledge of the literacy learning that happens in your child's classroom?

This kit helped me see how a child makes predictions while reading and how he relates to the text while thinking of his

3. How might you use the information learned from this literacy kit in the future when helping your child read?

I may remind him of real life situations similar situations our family has had to the text.

4. What else could be included in this literacy kit that would be more effective for you and your child?

I don't think anything else is necessary for this kit.

Appendix 34: Stacy's Parent Assessment of Main Idea Literacy Kit

Parent Survey for Parents

Name:

Stacy

Literacy kit:

main idea

4/1

1. How useful did you find the activity in this kit?

useful,

2. How did this kit expand your knowledge of the literacy learning that happens in your

child's classroom? It let me know that the students don't just have to read them but know what the books are about.

3. How might you use the information learned from this literacy kit in the future when helping your child read?

I'll ask her to tell me the main story of the book

4. What else could be included in this literacy kit that would be more effective for you and your child?

nothing I could think of.

3/25

Post-Kit Survey for Parents

Name: Kristen

Literacy Kit: Making Inferences

1. How useful did you find the activity in this kit?

It helps her to predict what will happen using context clues in the story.

2. How did this kit expand your knowledge of the literacy learning that happens in your child's classroom?

She is currently making inferences in her literacy group.

3. How might you use the information learned from this literacy kit in the future when helping your child read?

Ask her more questions about what she thinks will happen.

4. What else could be included in this literacy kit that would be more effective for you and your child?

make up specific questions that deal with inferencing and the actual book.

Appendix 36: Christopher's Student Pre-Assessment

Christopher 3A

Literacy Kit Study- Pre-assessment for Students

1. How much time do you spend working with your parents on your reading and writing homework?

At least 30 minutes.

2. Do you think that it is helpful when you work with your parents at home with your reading? Why or why not?

Yes, it is more fun and interesting.

3. Do you think that your parents are comfortable helping you with your reading homework? Why or why not?

Yes, definitely, because writing was my mom's favorite subject in college.

4. How does your parent usually help you when you are working together at home?

We read together and makes suggestions.

Appendix 37: Christopher's Student Assessment of Making Connections Literacy Kit

Post Kit Survey for Students

Name: Christopher

Literacy Kit: Connections

1. How did this kit help you think about your reading and writing in the classroom?

Since we made connections.

2. How did your parents help you with the activity in this literacy kit?

She pointed things out that I might not of noticed.

3. What could be changed about this literacy kit to make it more helpful in the future?

?

3/25

Christopher

Literacy Kit Study- Post-assessment for Students

1. How much time did you spend working with your parents on the literacy kits each week?

About an hour hour.

2. Do you think that it is helpful when you work with your parents at home with your reading?
Why or why not?

Yes I enjoy it more

3. Do you think that your parents are comfortable helping you with your reading homework? Why or why not?

Yes because my mom is smart

4. Do you think that using the literacy kits at home helped you become a stronger reader? Why or why not?

Not really because I knew the strategies.

Appendix 39: Kristen's Student Pre-Study Assessment

Kristen

3/4

Literacy Kit Study- Pre-assessment for Students

1. How much time do you spend working with your parents on your reading and writing homework?

20 minutes/day

2. Do you think that it is helpful when you work with your parents at home with your reading? Why or why not?

Yes because it is super duper fun!

3. Do you think that your parents are comfortable helping you with your reading homework? Why or why not?

Yes, because they know sometimes I need help.

4. How does your parent usually help you when you are working together at home?

They usually help by giving me prete in spelling or answering any questions I ask them.

Appendix 40: Kristen's Student Assessment of Visiting a Library Literacy Kit

3/11

Post Kit Survey for Students

Name: Kristen

Literacy Kit: Library Trip

1. How did this kit help you think about your reading and writing in the classroom?
I don't know.

2. How did your parents help you with the activity in this literacy kit?
They brought me to the library and helped me choose out books to use in the future.

3. What could be changed about this literacy kit to make it more helpful for other kids to use in the future?
By asking them how the book was helpful with reading.

Appendix 41: Kristen's Student Post-Study Assessment

Kristen

Literacy Kit Study- Post-assessment for Students

1. How much time did you spend working with your parents on the literacy kits each week?

10-20 minutes

2. Do you think that it is helpful when you work with your parents at home with your reading?
Why or why not?

No. Because I learn ^{alot} in school

3. Do you think that your parents are comfortable helping you with your reading homework? Why or why not?

Yes. because they want me to learn as much as possible

4. Do you think that using the literacy kits at home helped you become a stronger reader? Why or why not?

Yes because we do things you would do in a literacy group.

Appendix 42: Anthony's Student Pre-Assessment

Anthony

Literacy Kit Study- Pre-assessment for Students

1. How much time do you spend working with your parents on your reading and writing homework?

About 30 minutes a night.

2. Do you think that it is helpful when you work with your parents at home with your reading? Why or why not?

Yes, because then they can help you read better.

3. Do you think that your parents are comfortable helping you with your reading homework? Why or why not?

Yes, My mom reads a lot of time.

4. How does your parent usually help you when you are working together at home?

If I'm stuck on something like my math homework or spelling and reading

Post Kit Survey for Students

Name: Anthony

Literacy Kit: library

1. How did this kit help you think about your reading and writing in the classroom?

I think about books I've already read that I liked

2. How did your parents help you with the activity in this literacy kit?

my Parents help me make my final decision

3. What could be changed about this literacy kit to make it more helpful in the future?

nothing

3/11

Post Kit Survey for Students

Name: Anthony

Literacy Kit: Little blue big blue authors purpose

1. How did this kit help you think about your reading and writing in the classroom?

① authors write books for a purpose

2. How did your parents help you with the activity in this literacy kit?

My parents explained the different purposes why an author writes stories.

3. What could be changed about this literacy kit to make it more helpful for other kids to use in the future?

more space on the paper to write.

Literacy Kit Study- Post-assessment for Students

Anthony

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1. How much time did you spend working with your parents on the literacy kits each week?

10 - 15 minutes.

2. Do you think that it is helpful when you work with your parents at home with your reading?

Why or why not? yes, because it is easier

3. Do you think that your parents are comfortable helping you with your reading homework? Why or why not?

yes because it is easy for them.

4. Do you think that using the literacy kits at home helped you become a stronger reader? Why or why not?

yes, because every time you read you get better.

Appendix 46: Stacy's Student Pre-Assessment

stacy

3/4

Literacy Kit Study- Pre-assessment for Students

1. How much time do you spend working with your parents on your reading and writing homework? A lot Some time. It's a little bit too much!!
 2. Do you think that it is helpful when you work with your parents at home with your reading? Why or why not? I think it is helpful that my mom or dad is helping me with my reading, math because I sometimes need help or do not understand it.
 3. Do you think that your parents are comfortable helping you with your reading homework? Why or why not? I think they are comfortable helping me because I know they love me.
 4. How does your parent usually help you when you are working together at home? Well they help me with a lot of stuff. they help me by telling me what if you can't figure it out to get the answer
-

Post Kit Survey for Students

1/8

Name: Stacy

Literacy Kit: pie authors purpose

1. How did this kit help you think about your reading and writing in the classroom?

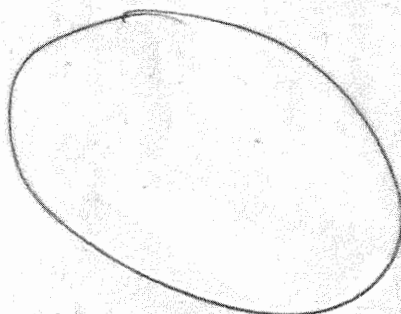
It helped me dy think about my reading and writing in the classroom

2. How did your parents help you with the activity in this literacy kit?

momt explain pie.

3. What could be changed about this literacy kit to make it more helpful in the future?

I ushely do that in there.



Literacy Kit Study- Post-assessment for Students

Stacy

1. How much time did you spend working with your parents on the literacy kits each week?

20 minutes

2. Do you think that it is helpful when you work with your parents at home with your reading?

Why or why not?

I do because what if you did
not know what to do? ~~No~~ Yes

3. Do you think that your parents are comfortable helping you with your reading homework? Why or why not?

I do because they do it.

4. Do you think that using the literacy kits at home helped you become a stronger reader? Why or why not?

I do not because I am all
ready a stronger
reader.

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